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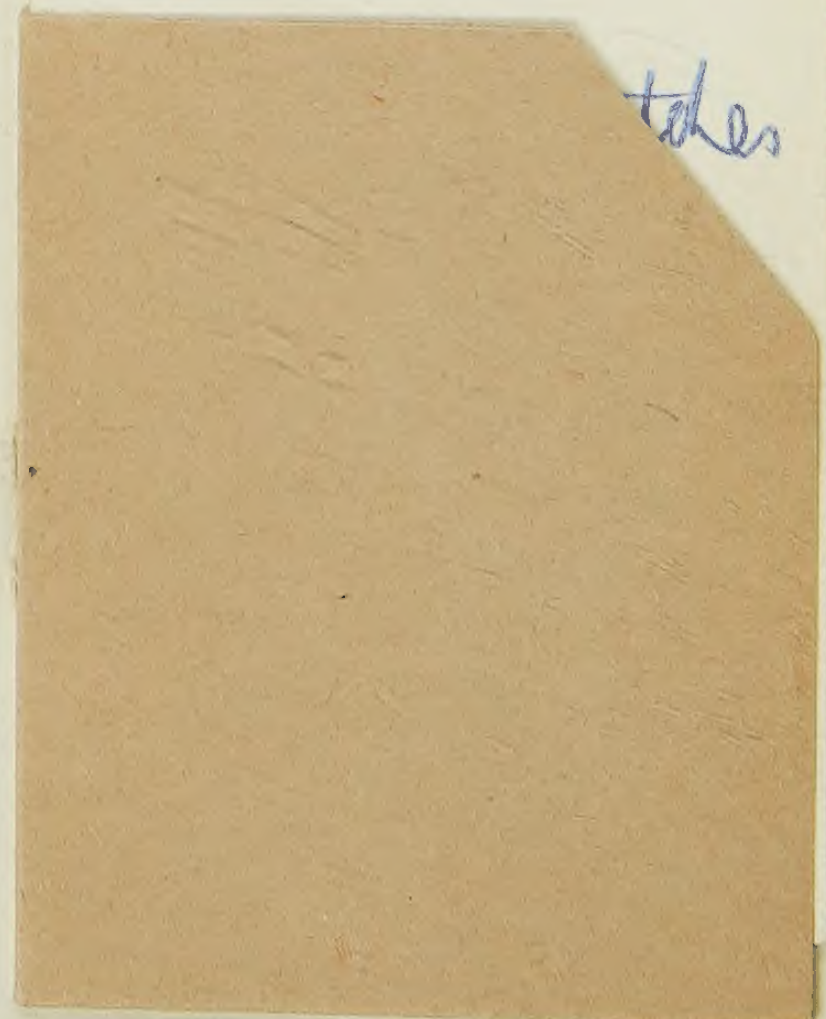
BROUGHAM,
Henry, Lord.



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HISTORICAL SKETCHES

OF

STATESMEN

WHO FLOURISHED IN

THE TIME OF GEORGE III.,

TO WHICH ARE ADDED

REMARKS ON THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

THIRD SERIES.

VOLUME I.

BY

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A NEW EDITION, CORRECTED BY THE AUTHOR.

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LEWISHAM.

INTRODUCTION.

THE third series of this work is delivered to the public under a grateful sense of the favour with which the two former were received. It has been my desire to make some small return for such kindness, by redoubling my care to prevent any bias of a party or a personal kind from influencing the opinions pronounced, whether upon men or upon measures. Conscious as every one must feel how naturally our affections are engaged in behalf of those whose opinions agree with our own, and how apt the adversaries of those opinions are to be hardly dealt with in the judgments we form of them, I have most scrupulously made it my endeavour to treat all with whose history I have dealt as if I was ignorant of the principles which professedly guided their conduct, until I came to describe how far it was governed by them.

It has further been the constant object of these pages to record whatever tended to promote the great and united causes of public virtue, free institutions, and universal peace; holding up their friends to the veneration of mankind, their enemies to scorn and aversion; while the glare that success gives to bad actions, and the shade into which good ones are thrown by failure, have, as far as possible, been shown to be temporary only; and mankind

have been constantly warned to struggle against the prepossession thus raised by the event, and to mete out their praise or blame by the just measure of desert.

The first part of the volume now published relates to the French Revolution, and to the men who bore the foremost part in its most trying and interesting crisis. In giving this account I have enjoyed particular advantages, having the pleasure of knowing several worthy and intelligent men who bore a part in the transactions of those times. To one of these, my learned colleague in the National Institute, M. Lakanal, I was introduced by the kindness of my distinguished friend M. Mignet; and I have received from him many important communications. He was not a member of the Committee of Public Safety; but he belonged to the high popular party in the Convention, and he was at the head of the Committee of Public Instruction. He retains, at the advanced age of above fourscore, all the ardent zeal for human improvement and steady devotion to the cause of freedom which so eminently marked his early years.

The reader of these pages is further under obligations to my frend Earl Stanhope for a valuable note respecting Fouché.

BROUGHAM, 1*st October*, 1843.

M. Lakanal died last spring. General Carnot, whom I also had the pleasure of knowing, died many years ago.

BROUGHAM, 11*th September*, 1845.

LONDON 36615

STATESMEN

OF THE

TIME OF GEORGE III.

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

It is impossible to understand the reign of terror which in France succeeded the overthrow of the monarchy, or to form a just idea of the too-celebrated individuals whose names are inseparably attached to the history of that dismal period, without examining the origin of the Revolution, marking the position in which it both found and placed the country, and tracing the steps of its progress from the first commotions that shook the ancient establishment, to the shock that consummated the destruction of the political system, and for a season appeared to threaten the ruin of society itself.

A controversy at one time prevailed upon the share which philosophers, and literary men generally, had in bringing about the great changes now under our consideration. They who raised this question really meant to discuss the influence

which had been exerted by the general diffusion of knowledge and improvement of the people, in creating a desire for more ample privileges and for a better system of government. For, although some few reasoners had contended that there was a sect of free-thinking men both disbelieving the religion and disapproving the political institutions of the State, leagued together in a kind of conspiracy to overthrow both, for the purpose of emancipating their species from all the ancient control under which they had so long been living, yet no one, who seriously reflected upon the disparity between the means and the end in the structure of this supposed scheme, could believe that any such plot had a chance of success, unless in so far as its authors might aid the general progress of mental improvement, which no one could deny was everywhere to be traced. Thus the Abbé Barruel and Professor Robison, who were the principal advocates of the doctrine, had not many followers; while a much more considerable body of reasoners maintained, not merely that the revolutionary spirit which had broken out in France, and was with difficulty repressed in other countries, had no connexion with any plot or the machinations of any sect, but that the whole convulsion which shook all Europe to its centre was the result of comparatively trivial and accidental circumstances.

This opinion was maintained with greater force

of argument and with more weight of authority, by M. Mounier, formerly President of the National Assembly, and distinguished by his talents, his virtues, and his patriotism, than by the bulk of ordinary writers and speakers. He had distinguished himself by the moderation of his liberal opinions when a member of the States-General; he had filled the chair of the assembly with great credit; and he had quitted France when the profligate and cruel councils of the violent party began to prevail. No man was better entitled to be heard upon the causes of a Revolution in which he had borne so honourable a part; and as his political opinions alike rejected the extremes of either side, dissenting as much from those who resisted all change as from those whom no change would satisfy, he seemed as safe a guide to the truth of the case as could well be selected from the host of reasoners whom the controversy called forth.

M. Mounier denied altogether the share ascribed to lodges of freemasons and chapters of *Illuminati* in producing the revolutionary movement; he rejected entirely the notions of those who traced to such actual conspiracies any portion of that great event; and had he stopped here, no one could have questioned the soundness of his views. Indeed he was enabled, from his personal knowledge of the actors in the French States-General and National Assembly, to refute the specific statements of fact

upon which the speculations of the Abbé Barruel and his followers reposed. Thus, to take a single example, the machinations which were asserted to have been practised upon M. Camille Jourdan (a worthy person of extremely insignificant talents and no influence), and to have gained him over to the revolutionary party, could not by possibility have been so used, inasmuch as that gentleman assured M. Mounier that he had never in his life seen or communicated with a single individual of those confidently named by the Abbé as his seducers, or with any other persons of the same class.

But M. Mounier did not content himself with excluding the lodges and the chapters of secret associations; he was equally confident in his exclusion of the philosophers and their writings. Not only, according to him, had the direct attempts by plot and conspiracy no hand in undermining the old French Government, but the indirect and gradual influence of infidel opinions, and revolutionary doctrines propagated through the press, the encyclopædias, the dissertations, the romances, the correspondence, the poems, the epigrams—all the heavy and all the light artillery of the band so formidable by its numbers, its learning, its genius, and its wit, so indefatigable in its exertions against the established order of things, so incessant in its efforts to undermine all prejudices, to strip all established institutions of the respect with which time

and feeling and associations had clothed them, so zealous in converting mankind from settled faith in holy things, in rousing them against abuses as well in the State as the Church, in declaring the natural rights of men, in painting their wrongs, in displaying the merits of the people, and denouncing the crimes of priests and princes—all the teaching of the D'Alemberts, the Condorcets, the sneerings of the Voltaires, the eloquence of the Rousseaus, the fancy of the Diderots, the social powers of the Holbachs and the Grimms—all were without influence in preparing the great change; and the press, which over Paris and over France had for a century been working with the corruptions of the Court and the Church and the sufferings of the people, and had taken its whole tone from the writings of those great men, and the circles of fashion which everywhere concentrated and reflected the lights thus shed abroad—were all, according to M. Mounier, wholly foreign to the purpose, wholly unconcerned in bringing about a change that took precisely the direction to which all those efforts pointed; in overthrowing a system of ecclesiastical and political government, against which all those blows had been aimed; in producing a general movement of that people, to excite whom in this very manner and to this very movement all those various exertions had so evidently been made. It should seem that those who held such opinions as

these were prepared to believe, on seeing a battery erected against a town, and bearing its fire upon the walls for weeks, that the breach which was made had not been caused by bullets, but by an accidental earthquake. According to M. Mounier and his followers, the whole mystery of the Revolution was contained in the accidental derangement of the Finances, the convocation of the States-General, and the vacillating conduct of the Court and the Ministers in first suffering the Commons—the *tiers état*—to have a double number of representatives, and afterwards allowing the three orders to join in their deliberations, sitting in the same hall. Had it not been, they contended, for the recent addition of nearly fifty millions to the debt, while the revenue was insufficient to defray the public expenditure and pay the interest owing to the public creditor, had not the King agreed to call the States when no means of obtaining the needful supplies could be devised; nay, after they were called, had not an undue proportion of deputies been granted to the Commons, and the majority thus created been permitted to act on the whole body by joint voting,—the whole storm would have passed away, and the ancient establishments have continued to guide the religion and rule the fortunes of the country.

On the opposite side of the question there appeared one of the most remarkable pieces that ever

adorned the periodical literature of any country. Mr. Jeffrey began his labours in the 'Edinburgh Review,' and laid the foundation of that celebrated journal's fame by a paper, in which he examined and refuted M. Mounier's doctrine—a paper of which it would be hard to determine whether the inexhaustible imagery of its illustrations, the profound wisdom of its opinions, or the felicitous diction of its style, most deserves our admiration. This eminent person and those who agree with him are far from denying that the deranged finances of the country, and the imbecility of the Government, had a share in accelerating the Revolution and in directing its course. A yearly expenditure of sixteen millions, with a revenue of less than nineteen, leaving not three to pay the interest and charges on the debt of between ten and eleven millions annually, formed such dreadful embarrassment as might well shake any established system, how wisely and how vigorously soever it was administered. But it is certain that greater disorder has prevailed in the revenue of other States, and has been got over by the rough, though vigorous, expedients which arbitrary power has at command, without even shaking the stability of the national institutions. Nor could all the errors of the Neckers, the Briennes, the Maurepas, the Calonnes, have dislocated any portion of a system which had not been prepared to crumble in pieces by the ravages of time, or the undermining of the public opinion, or

the ferment of popular discontent, and the universal prevalence of a love of change.

M. Mounier was correctly and beautifully described in the paper referred to as having given for the causes of the Revolution, circumstances which really proved it to be already begun; as having gone no further back than to the earliest of its apparent effects, instead of tracing its hidden sources; as having mistaken the cataracts that broke the stream for the fountains from which it rose; and contented himself with referring the fruit to the blossom, without taking any account of the germination of the seed, or the underground winding of the root.*

It is certain that, though the financial derangement powerfully aided the preachers of revolt, and though their efforts were not met by any adequate vigour on the part of those who administered the power of the government, yet these were far enough from being the cause of the Revolution. The apostles of change found more powerful coadjutors and more active and ample elements of mischief in the great abuses which prevailed both in the Ecclesiastical and the Civil institutions of the country. A church endowed with above five millions of revenue from tithes alone, and with nearly half the land in the kingdom, assigned only a wretched pittance of twenty pounds a-year to the parochial or working clergy, while all the rest was a prey to the vices of

* Edinburgh Review, vol. i. p. 7.

a luxurious, an idle, and a dissolute hierarchy. The landed property of the country was so unequally divided that one-third of it alone was in the hands of the lay commonalty, the church and the nobles possessing all the rest. The taxes were so unequally distributed that the largest of them all (the *Taille*), yielding between seven and eight millions, fell wholly upon the peasantry, neither church nor nobles paying a farthing towards it; and it was calculated that if an acre of land afforded three guineas of gross produce, nearly two went to the revenue, eighteen shillings to the landlord, and a crown only remained to the cultivator. In England Mr. A. Young used to reckon that the cultivator enjoyed three-fourths of the produce, while in France he had but a twelfth part; placing him in a situation nine times less advantageous. The grievances arising from the feudal system, and which were felt far more severely in France than in any other feudal kingdom, completed the distress of the people, affecting them both in their subsistence, in their comforts, and in their pride. Nor can it be doubted that, upon a high-spirited people like the French, with minds peculiarly susceptible of affront, the mental degradation which these feudal distinctions inflicted was more galling than any actual suffering which in their material comforts they had to endure. It is highly probable that the peasant felt more vexed

at seeing the lord's pigeons trespassing on his crops, without the power of destroying them, knowing that the lord might not possess an acre of land,* than he did from paying a tithe of that crop to the church and a third to the landlord; and the statute labour (*corvée*) which he always had to perform must have harassed him incalculably more than a much heavier burthen shared with the feudal lord. Accordingly, of all the changes effected by the Revolution, there was none which went more home to every Frenchman's bosom than the famous decree sweeping away feudal privileges. The vote of the Assembly on the 4th of August diffused joy over all France, such as perhaps no other act of legislative power ever excited. It may be said, without a figure of speech, to have raised one universal shout of exultation through the whole expanse of that vast and populous country. The language applied by Mr. Burke to the memorable proceedings of that night, and which termed it the "St. Bartholomew of the privileged orders," was employed by but a very few, and did not express the sentiments prevailing even among the members of those orders themselves, from whom indeed the proposition mainly had proceeded.

* The *droit de Colombier* was wholly dependent on the seignory, and might belong to a lord who had no property in land: the actual owner had it only in a very limited extent.—*Political Philosophy*, part 1, chap. xiii.

Just half a century after these events I happened to be travelling in a remote district of Provence, when, reposing in the heat of the day under a porch, my eye was attracted by some placards, whose letters were preserved by the great dryness of that fine climate, though they had been there for fifty years. Those papers were the official promulgation of the several decrees for secularizing the clergy, abolishing the monastic orders, and abrogating all feudal privileges, signed by the several Presidents of the Assembly, Bureau de Pusey,* Camus, and Siéyes. The incident is exceedingly trivial in itself; but I shall not easily forget its effect in carrying me back to the great scenes of the Revolution, ere yet its path had been stained with blood, while virtuous men might honestly exult in its success, and the friends of their species could venture to hope for the unsullied triumphs of the sacred warfare waged with long-established abuses. The past seemed connected with the present, and the mighty consequences visible all around which had flowed from the changes recorded in those few lines, appeared to rise, as it were, before the sight, springing out of their causes. Nor must it be forgotten that the perils of the tempest having happily passed away, the atmosphere which it had cleared was breathed in a pleasing reflection that the region over which its fury had swept was now flourishing in unprecedented prosperity, for which the price paid had as-

* Afterwards confined at Olmutz with Lafayette.

surely been heavy, but not too heavy compared with the blessings it had purchased.

Hitherto we have only considered the proceedings of the National Assembly itself; but that memorable body was not the only organ of public opinion and popular feeling, nor were its deliberations entirely free and uncontrolled. As soon as parties began to form themselves within its circle, appeals to the people out of doors were the natural consequence, each seeking to gain the weight arising in revolutionary times from popular support. At first, with the exception of one or two scenes of dreadfully excited popular fury, the press alone was the channel through which the party leaders sought to influence public opinion. The religious feelings of the people were next appealed to; but the tendency of the clergy to support the ancient institutions, and the course of hostility to the Church so early pursued by almost all parties in the Assembly, soon brought such feeble and roundabout appeals to a close; and a more summary and effectual mode of agitating was discovered. Clubs were formed, at which men not belonging to the Assembly, as well as deputies, met to discuss the topics of the day, and especially the proceedings of their representatives. These meetings were at first private and not numerous; soon they became better attended, and were much frequented by the deputies themselves; then their doors were flung open to the people. The earliest association of this

kind was formed by the deputies from Brittany. When the National Assembly was removed from Versailles to the capital, the club, becoming more numerous, held its meetings at the Jacobin Convent in the Rue St. Honoré, and admitted as members many persons not belonging to the National Assembly. Perceiving that its influence upon the Assembly was considerable, the Club now endeavoured to rule the municipality or Town-Council of Paris, a body always possessed of great influence from the large revenues at its disposal, and the great number of persons in its constant employ for the management of those revenues, as well as of the Metropolitan Police. The Jacobin Club, as it was now termed, extended its influence to the provinces, and formed everywhere affiliated societies or clubs which corresponded with it, took their tone from its debates, and exercised in each town an influence like its own.

Dissension, however, broke out in the mother society itself. The more moderate men, with Lafayette and Siéyes at their head, retired to form an association of their own, which they termed the Club of '89, while Lameth and Barnave directed the proceedings of the Jacobins. The new Club chiefly influenced the Assembly; the Jacobins always made their appeal to the people. The Royalist party soon attempted a similar policy, first forming a Club called the "*Impartiaux*," which had no success; then one termed the "*Monarchique*,"

which was so much better attended that it excited the jealousy of the Parisian mob, gave rise to tumults, and was shut up at the beginning of the year 1791 on that account by the police, which thought it just and reasonable to punish the party assailed, because those who attacked it had been guilty of some violence.

The Jacobins now underwent another change; the Lameths and Barnaves, unwilling to push matters to extremity, formed a new club, called the "*Feuillans*," from the convent at which they met; and the direction of the Jacobins fell into the hands of Pétion and of Robespierre. But there were some who deemed these men and their followers not sufficiently favourable to extreme courses. Danton, Camille Desmoulins, and Fabre d'Eglantine seceded to form a more violent club, which met at the Convent of the *Vieux Cordeliers*, and took from thence their name. Among these different clubs, the Jacobins exercised the greatest influence both over the Assembly, the municipality, and the people at large; but all of them, by their unceasing agitation, kept the people in a constant ferment of disquiet; all of them, by their overbearing conduct, kept the deliberations of the Assembly under a control as indecent as it was pernicious; all of them prepared the materials of a combustible train, which a spark might at any time fire into a general explosion. Unhappily the Assembly did not present from the first a firm and determined aspect of re-

sistance, so as to secure for itself the unbiassed freedom of discussion and of decision. But the first Assembly had far less to suffer from the interruption of the multitude than the second and the Convention afterwards had to endure.

It was to be remarked that the total number of those who frequented and composed the clubs was really far from being formidable. Thus 1500 was the whole body which usually composed the Jacobin meetings—a number quite inefficient to overcome either the constituted authorities of the capital, or the mass of its inhabitants, though truly formidable as a band of active agitators; for it must be remembered that all those men were demagogues and intriguers—men heated with enthusiasm, or agitated by the love of change, or prompted by mere desire of mischief; and as for their debates, the meetings were far too numerous for anything like discussion; so that when they made the proceedings of the legislature the subject of their deliberation every night as soon as the Assembly had adjourned, nothing could be heard but violent invective against some members, and exaggerated praise of others, ending in a resolution, carried by acclamation of the assembled mob, to excite some tumult among the multitude, in order either to further or to obstruct the course of the national councils. The more sober-minded and respectable classes of the community held aloof from all such

proceedings. The great majority of the tradespeople, the shopkeepers, the artisans, even the better-most labourers, and almost all the proprietors, or persons of fixed means, took no part in what was going on, but regarded the acts of the legislature with interest, and the violence of the clubs with silent dread; while the mere rabble, which had nothing to lose, and never reflected on questions which they were too ignorant to understand, were —either from love of confusion and its sister, plunder, or from the mere heat of uninformed but easily excited fancy and feeling—the ready tools of the clubmen, as often as a demonstration of mob force was wanted, in order to overawe the Government, or to determine the conduct of individuals. It became thus clear that a small minority was enabled to rule the multitude, and influence the people of the capital. A similar force was exerted by the provincial clubs upon the people of the towns; and the influence exerted on the deliberations of the Assembly was the power of a small but active body, who had thrown off all regard to order or moderation, and who were devoted to whatever most worked for great changes, with an audacity to which fear was as much a stranger as principle, or prudence, or discretion.

When the National Assembly had destroyed the greater evils of which the people complained, and had formed a constitution upon the principles of

a mixed or limited monarchy, they voluntarily stripped themselves of their functions, abdicated their power, and resigned into the hands of the people the high trust which had been delegated to them. Such a course was quite fitting, and indeed was the inevitable consequence of a new constitution being established. But there was coupled with the dissolution of the Assembly a provision unexampled in the history of human folly, and which nevertheless was adopted almost without discussion, and by general acclamation. It was declared that no one of the members of the first Assembly should be capable of being elected to the second; and the consequence was, that every man of weight and experience, all those whose capacity and integrity had most recommended them to the confidence of their fellow citizens, whose trust-worthiness had been brought to the test of experience, and whose opinions had become known to the world, were excluded from the body which was called to work the new Constitution, and to make a code of municipal laws for France. Unknown, inexperienced, untried men were alone suffered to execute the most important functions that mortals can perform, and in circumstances of the greatest difficulty. The result answered to the expectations which all reasonable men had formed. The conduct of the legislative body was that of an inexperienced multitude, wholly under the control of the most

violent parties out of doors, unable to maintain its own independence, and incapable even of preserving the decorous appearance of a senate in its own hall, as often as the mob rushed into its presence.

But the bad constitution of the new Assembly was produced not more by the absurd rule excluding all the former members, than by the other means which the authors of that rule used to fill it with the creatures of their faction. The clubs, especially the more powerful one of the Jacobins, were the instigators of Robespierre's motion for the exclusion; and they assured themselves that its result would be to throw into their hands the whole elections of the new legislature. Accordingly they pursued a course of agitation and canvass with the unceasing activity which is only known to popular bodies, with the boldness which even they only possess in the troublous times of revolutionary excitement, and with a perseverance unusual to popular bodies even in those times. The mother club of Paris disposed of all the elections there,*

* It must be confessed that frequently the French people displayed in their elections a regard for their principles, and a sense of gratitude towards public benefactors, which we in vain look for among the people of our own country. No man of any eminence in the two first Assemblies was excluded from a seat in the Convention or Council of Five Hundred; and if any one lost his election in the places of his own department, some other was sure to choose him. To Carnôt the extraordinary honour was paid of no less than fourteen places returning him to the Council of Five

and the affiliated societies in the departments exercised equal sway over the provincial returns. The influence of the clubs therefore, but especially of the Jacobin Club, was prodigiously augmented by the general election; and over the new Assembly they exercised an almost unlimited control. In proportion to the obscurity and insignificance of the newly-elected deputies was the importance of those who had obtained the whole confidence of the country by their great exploits in the former Assembly. That weight must have been constantly felt to bias the deliberations of their unknown and nameless successors, even had no means been provided of bringing it to bear directly and substantially upon the proceedings of the legislative body; but the clubs, in which the known leaders, members of the former Assembly, continued to debate all questions before the people, and with the greatest publicity, seconded by the press, rendered their influence altogether irresistible. If Robespierre, in proposing their exclusion from the new Assembly, had no other design than the avowed object of ex-

Hundred. In England, let the man who has rendered the most valuable services in Parliament, and shown himself the best qualified to discharge the important duties of a representative, lose his seat by any accident, and, for want of funds and of aristocratic support, he may reckon on being left out altogether. No other place feels a call to return him, as constant experience has shown, to the extreme discredit of the English character.

tending the popular power, and purifying the legislature from all personal and party taint, nothing can be considered more absurd than the scheme; but if his plan was to make the new Assembly the mere instrument of a few men who had borne sway in the old, and to place the whole powers of the state in the hands of a few agitators, acting through the mob of Paris, the project must be allowed on all hands to have been wisely and warily conceived, and certainly its success was complete.

Fully to perceive the obscurity of the men into whose hands the legislative power was now nominally committed, we have only to look at the official reports of the debates during the month of October, 1791, when the new Assembly met. Forty-three members spoke in the second meeting: of these the names of sixteen only are given; the remaining twenty-seven are in blank, the reporters having been utterly unable to name them; they are all called Monsieur . . . . In the third sitting twenty-seven spoke, and twenty are recorded anonymously. The temper of the body, moved entirely by the Jacobin Club, may be ascertained with almost equal accuracy from the proceedings which first were taken. The titles of *Sire* and *Your Majesty* were refused to the King, the first magistrate under the constitution which they had just sworn to uphold; and a seat was allotted to him in the Chamber of the size, form, and elevation

of the President's! The childish nature of these measures, while it conveyed a notion of the petty minds that were ruling France, could not conceal from the eye of the observer the evil spirit which guided their deliberations.

The power of the clubs, and especially of the Jacobins, now rose in proportion to the obscurity and insignificance of the men thus unknown who led the deliberations of the Assembly. But it was not by merely holding their nightly meetings, and giving vent to the most violent sentiments in their inflammatory harangues, that the Jacobins obtained so uncontrollable an influence. Those meetings, no doubt, of themselves were sufficient to bring into complete discredit the proceedings of the Assembly, because they were attended by the ablest and most popular men in public life, and their debates naturally excited far more interest than those of the obscure Assembly. In this country the Parliament has always found it necessary, for the maintenance of its own superiority and importance, possibly for preserving its existence, to put down with a strong hand every rival body. Accordingly, in 1817, when the convention was assembled, of delegates to sit in London, discussing public measures, and about to publish reports of their debates, the Parliament passed an Act declaring such a meeting unlawful, as had been done formerly by the Irish Parliament, and since the Union by the

British Parliament, with respect to Ireland. The ground of the apprehensions which led to these measures was the consciousness that, independent of the direct authority of the legislature derived from its actual power, its weight with the people depends, at least in modern times, upon its debates; and that a greater portion of that weight than it could afford to lose would inevitably be transferred to the rival body. In Paris the Assembly was weakened, and all but suspended, by the operation of the same causes in the proceedings of the Jacobin Club; but though these might, in the end, have proved destructive to the Assembly, the Jacobins were not content to await the result of so slow a process of discredit. They determined on keeping alive the direct authority of the Assembly, and using it as their instrument. They assumed, therefore, the tone of superiority, and used the language of dictation. Their resolutions were communicated by deputations at the Assembly's bar; but they had recourse to other measures for the purpose of giving weight to their representations, and overawing at once the executive and the legislative functions of the state. The municipality of Paris was under the control of the club; and the mob, chiefly through that body, whose funds were large, and whose servants were very numerous, was so completely at the club's disposal that it could, upon any occasion, bring into the field a force of

thousands, among whom were many desperate men, ready at all times for every extremity of sanguinary violence. The greatest outrages were indeed, at first, not committed in the capital, but by the affiliated societies, chiefly in the south of France. Alarming disturbances broke out, particularly at Nismes, where the Catholics and Protestants came into collision, exasperating by their religious fanaticism the violence of political faction; and a great number of lives were sacrificed to the fury of the contending parties. The amount of this slaughter is differently stated, but no account reduces it below several hundreds; and the Assembly, acting under the control of the mother club, did not bring to punishment some atrocious miscreants whose cannibal ferocity had been proved before it, but suffered them, after a slight examination, to return and renew the same horrors upon the scene of their former crimes.

It appears, from various unsuspected sources of information, that the leaders of the extreme parties were fully sensible of their having only an inconsiderable numerical force compared with those who adhered either to the ancient order of things, or the new and mixed constitution. The republican party formed a very inconsiderable minority everywhere, though in Paris they had a following among the literary and scientific classes, and among the lower orders, ever ready for change, and prone to

fancy that all confusion must benefit them. But the party of the Gironde, the earliest to declare for a republic, were all along conscious of their weakness in point of numerical strength, and felt the necessity of overawing the majority by strong demonstrations of physical force. Even after this had produced its effect in silencing opposition, and attracting that portion of the multitude which in civil broils is always ready to side with the more powerful party, we find the Republican leaders confessing with bitterness of spirit that they had but a small proportion of the people with them. After the overthrow of monarchy, it was a saying of Barrère, "Il y a une République—il n'y a pas de républicains."—One of the Gironde (Saulavie) boasted that his party "had defeated the wishes of the country on the 10th August with three thousand workmen."—When Pétion was declaring that there were but five Republicans in all France, Collot d'Herbois and Merlin de Thionville, in an altercation with him, exclaimed, "Nous avons fait le dix d'Août sans vous, et nous allons faire la République contre vous."—As late as July 3, 1791, we find Merlin de Douai speaking of the abolition of royalty with horror as meaning "a frightful civil war," and arguing on the utter impossibility of forming a republic in an extensive country. (*Mém. de Lafayette*, iii. 383.)—Danton, in his address to the Council of Ministers upon the mea-

sures to be taken for the defence of the country after the allies had taken Longwy, and were cannonading Verdun (31st August, 1792), used these remarkable expressions; "Vous ne pouvez pas vous dissimuler l'extrême minorité dans l'état du parti qui veut la république." (You cannot conceal from yourselves the very insignificant minority of the party in the country which is for a republic.)—His inference from thence was, that terror alone would gain the day. "Il faut faire peur aux Royalistes. Effrayez les!"—On the eve of the too-memorable days of September, he followed up this counsel with these ever-to-be-remembered words: "Pour vaincre, que faut-il? De l'audace! Encore de l'audace! et toujours de l'audace!—et la France est sauvée."*

Upon this principle the Jacobins and other leaders of the extreme party faithfully acted. The Gironde, composed chiefly of deputies from that district, and thence deriving their name, were men of respectable character, averse for the most part to violent proceedings, much connected with the press, of a speculative and literary cast, disliking, even despising, all popular associations, but of a blind fanaticism in favour of their own political opinions. At first they are supposed not to have favoured

* For what reason I know not, the most remarkable words, "*et la France est sauvée*," are left out by most authors The debate in the 'Moniteur' gives them as in the text.

republican courses, chiefly from their unpopular tastes and habits. But, whether from finding themselves without any support with any portion of the community if they maintained their merely constitutional doctrines, or from the natural tendency of those doctrines when embraced with fanatical zeal to merge in republicanism, certain it is that they soon became the chief patrons of those extreme views which sought the destruction of royalty; and though disinclined to all excesses, were fain to call for so much violence as might silence their adversaries, giving the minority that power through terror which they wanted by the force of reason, or on the balance of numbers. Accordingly they actively joined in a very indecent attack both upon the Assembly and the Palace, which the republican mob made on the 20th of June, when they marched armed through the hall of the former, and, forcing their entrance into the courts and chambers of the latter, compelled the unhappy monarch to recognize the power of the mob by wearing the red cap, and all but violated the sanctity of his person. The virtual destruction of the monarchy soon followed; for on the 10th of August the government had not the vigour, or Pétion, the mayor, and other heads of the police, had not the honesty, to prevent an armed mob of many thousands from occupying the palace and massacreing the Swiss guards, whom Louis had with

inconceivable folly persisted in retaining about his person, without having the firmness to use them in his defence.

The imprisonment of the royal family and the calling a National Convention, which at its first sitting established the Republic, were the immediate consequences of that memorable day. Yet a few weeks before, sixty-nine out of the eighty-three departments into which France was then divided, had declared themselves friendly to the existing and moderate monarchical constitution; and only two days before the capture of the Tuileries by the mob, a trial of strength between the parties in the Assembly, on the motion for Lafayette's impeachment, who had openly declared against extreme measures, gave the moderate party a majority of four hundred and six over two hundred and twenty-four voices. When the blow was struck, even before the new elections, these moderate men had disappeared; and the Convention, containing many members of the second or Legislative Assembly, with all the most eminent of the first or Constituent, was forced to follow with blind deference the councils of the republican leaders, or rather to obey the dictation of the Jacobin Club.

Here let us pause, and respectfully giving ear to the warnings of past experience, as whispered by the historic muse, let us calmly revolve in our

minds the very important lessons of wisdom and of virtue, applicable to all times, which these memorable details from recent annals are fitted to teach.

In the *first* place, they show the danger of neglecting due precautions against the arts and the acts of violent partisans working upon the public mind, and of permitting them to obtain an ascendant, by despising their power, or trusting to their being overwhelmed and lost in the greater multitude of the peaceable and the good. The numbers of the ill-intentioned may be very inconsiderable; yet the tendency of such extreme opinions, when zealously propagated because fanatically entertained, is always to spread; their direction is ever forward; and the disposition of the respectable and peaceable classes is ever to be inactive, sluggish, indifferent, ultimately submissive. When Mr. Burke compared the agitators of his day to the grasshoppers in a summer's sun, and the bulk of the people to the British ox, whose repose under the oak was not broken by the importunate chink rising from the insects of an hour, he painted a picturesque and pleasing image, and one accurate enough for the purpose of showing that the public voice is not spoken by the clamours of the violent. But unhappily the grasshopper fails to represent the agitator in this, that it cannot rouse any one of the minority to the attack; while the ox does represent but too faithfully the re-

spectable majority, in that he is seldom roused from his ruminating half-slumber till it is too late to avert his fate.

But, *secondly*, it is not merely the activity of agitators that arms them with force to overpower the bulk of the people—their acts of intimidation are far more effectual than any assiduity and any address. We see how a handful of men leading the Paris mob overturned the monarchy, and then set up and maintained an oligarchy of the most despotic character that ever was known in the world, all the while ruling the vast majority of a people that utterly loathed them, ruling that people with an iron rod, and scourging them with scorpions. This feat of tyranny they accomplished by terror alone. A rabble of ten or twelve thousand persons occupying the capital overawed half a million of men as robust, perhaps as brave, as themselves; but the rabble were infuriated, and they had nothing to lose; the Parisian burghers were calm, and had shops, and wives, and children; and they were fain to be still, in order that no outrage should be committed on their property or their persons. The tendency of great meetings of the people is two-fold—their numbers are always exaggerated both by the representations of their leaders* and by the fears of the bystanders; and

* The Irish demagogues speak of addressing three and four hundred thousand persons in districts where the whole population of all ages amounts to less than half the number.

the spectacle of force which they exhibit, and the certainty of the mischief which they are capable of doing, when excited and resisted by any but the force of troops, scares all who do not belong to them. Hence the vast majority of the people, afraid to act, remain quiet, and give the agitators the appearance of having no adversaries. They reverse the maxim, whoso is not with us is against us, and hold all with them whom they may have terrified into silence and repose. That this effect of intimidation is prodigious, no one can doubt. It acts and re-acts; and while fear keeps one portion of the people neutral and quiet, the impression that there is, if not a great assent to the agitators, at least little resistance to them, affects the rest of the people until the great mass is quelled, and large numbers are even induced by their alarms partially to join in the unopposed movement.

But, *lastly*, it behoves us to consider how powerful a voice is raised by these facts in condemnation of the sluggish, the selfish, the pusillanimous conduct of those who, by their acquiescence and neutrality, arm a despicable and unprincipled minority with absolute power. And assuredly a warning, as well as a condemnation, proceeds from the same view of the facts; for nothing can be more short-sighted than the policy of those timid or inactive persons who suffer themselves, for the sake of present ease and safety, to be deterred from performing their

duty to the community. How deeply blameable were the respectable classes of the French capital in preferring their quiet to their duty, and making no head against the clubs and their mob! But how heavy a penalty did they pay for the momentary repose which their cowardice purchased! The Reign of Terror, under which no life was secure for a day; the wholesale butcheries both of the prisoners in September, and by the daily executions that soon followed; the violence of the conscription, which filled every family with orphans and widows; the profligate despotism and national disasters under the Directory; the military tyranny of Napoleon; the sacrifice of millions to slake his thirst of conquest; the invasion of France by foreign troops—pandours, hussars, cossacks, twice revelling in the spoils of Paris; the humiliating occupation of the country for five years by the allied armies, and her ransom by the payment of millions;—these were the consequences, more or less remote, of the Reign of Terror, which so burnt into the memory of all Frenchmen the horrors of anarchy as to make an aversion to change for a quarter of a century the prevailing characteristic of a people not the least fickle among the nations, and to render a continuance of any yoke bearable, compared with the perils of casting it off. All these evils were the price paid by the respectable classes of France, but especially of Paris, for their

unworthy dread of resisting the clubs and the mob in 1792.

Among the lessons taught by the French Revolution, I have not mentioned the obvious one which it inculcates upon all rulers not to disregard the people's rights, nor withhold such reforms as the people have a title to expect, and as the state of the national institutions demands. For this is the inference from the first stage of the great event, and not from that last consummation which we have been more immediately occupied with. The power of the clubs and the Paris mob did not at all rest upon the refusal of the Government to give whatever improvements were required by the state of France. No pretext could be urged on any such ground either to justify or to palliate the enormities of those who acted in the sanguinary scenes, or the pusillanimity of those who permitted them to usurp and to abuse supreme power. The utmost latitude had been given to reformation in every branch of the state long before any attempts were made to subvert the constitutional government; and the success of those attempts had nothing whatever to do with the views or the grievances of Reformers, or with any complaints of the people.

We have now traced the establishment of a system of intimidation to its real sources, the

numerical weakness of the Republican party, and their determination to govern the country in spite of the opinions and the wishes of the bulk of the community. They thus succeeded in overthrowing the monarchy, and establishing a republic in its place; but the inevitable consequence of this victory speedily followed. No sooner were they in full and almost undisputed possession of power, than the temper and ambition of individual leaders, seconded by the violence or by the subserviency of inferior persons, their followers, marshalled the Republican body in parties, thirsting for supremacy, animated with bitter, mutual hatred, and wholly unscrupulous about the means which they took to gratify the one passion by usurping the whole powers of government, or the other by destroying their rivals. The Convention was the governing body of the state: its numbers, between seven and eight hundred, were far too great for calm and deliberate discussion; for unless its proceedings had become regulated, like those of our own Parliament, by long usage, and its members had, like our representatives, acquired by practice the habits of orderly debate, such a body was unwieldy and incapable of sustained deliberation. Even as a legislature this defect was unavoidable, and intimately mixed up with its constitution. But much more was the number of its members wholly incompatible with the functions of a body

which possessed the executive as well as the legislative powers, and even interfered with the judicial authority. Hence the want of a vigorous government, in the perils which surrounded the country both from foreign war and from financial embarrassment, rendered it absolutely necessary that the Convention should delegate its powers to smaller bodies; and this led to the appointment of the Committees whose names have become so famous in the history of the times—the Committees of General Security and Public Safety (*De Sûreté Générale* and *De Salut Public*)—of which the latter soon assumed the whole executive power in the state. It consisted of nine, and afterwards of ten, members, among the most eminent of the Jacobin party.

Let it not, however, be supposed that the Convention was a body insignificant from its composition, like the Legislative Assembly. It was far too numerous for action, but it contained the most able and eminent men of the day. In the first place there were fifty-seven of the Constituent Assembly, including twenty-two of the most remarkable of its members—as Robespierre, Siéyes, Prieur de la Marne, Merlin de Douai, Grégoire, Barrère, Boissy d'Anglas. Then there were sixty-six of the Legislative Assembly, much less distinguished men, as might be expected, yet including four or five of eminence—as Condorcet, Merlin de

Thionville. Then there were fifty-eight magistrates, some of whom were eminent--as Cambacérès, Bonnier, Rebecqui, Laréveillère Lepaux, Roberjot —almost all respectable men; seventy-seven advocates, including Danton, Guiton de Morveau, the celebrated chemist, Poulain Grandpré, Ricord, Thibaudeau, Billaud Varennes, Vergniaud; twenty-two physicians, including Fourcroy, Lanthenas, Hardy, Eschasserieux, Dubouchet, Bourgoing; thirteen bishops, including Robert Lindet, Grégoire, Thibault; five Protestant ministers, including Rabaut St. Etienne, Lasonne; nineteen men of letters, almost all of whom had been favourably known by their writings, but Lakanal, Collot d'Herbois, Chénier, Dupuis, Fréron, Fabre d'Eglantine, Mercier, were the most distinguished; to which must be added twenty-six who had become known for their merits, either as men of speculation or action; and in this last class were enrolled the names of Carnôt, Barras, Cambon, Desmoulins, St. Just, Gasparin, Isnard, Legendre, Tallien, Dubois Crancé.

A body thus composed, and chosen by the nation, which, though acting under the influence of the clubs and the mob, yet gave their confidence to the Deputies appointed, certainly possessed resources and power abundantly sufficient for governing the country with vigour; and it soon showed that these powers were intrusted to able hands. The judicious

course taken of delegating the whole executive functions to Committees of small numbers, and the firmness with which the Convention's confidence and support were given to those Committees, is above all praise. Their plan of proceeding early adopted, that of making reports from these bodies, and raising discussions in the Assembly itself upon the subjects brought forward, had the effect of giving the executive power a constant support from the people, whose interest in the public proceedings was thus kept alive; and the Government acted, or seemed to act, as the organ of the community, while its vigour was proportioned to the narrow limits within which its powers were concentrated. The wonderful exertions made for the public defence, the progress of the national arms in foreign conquest, the facility with which the whole resources of the state were called forth and employed for the exigencies of its service, powerfully attest the genius which presided over the revolutionary councils, and the vigour which carried them into effect. The Convention was, like the Venetian aristocracy, the ruling power; but its authority was wielded by the Committee, acting like the Council of Ten, while the Revolutionary Tribunal supplied the Inquisitor's place. Happy, if no other motive had animated and actuated the system but a desire to defend France, or even to extend her dominions!—happy, if, with the force

which the constitution bestowed, there had not continued to grow and overpower, that terror which had from the earlier times of the Revolution proved the mainspring of all its movements!

Very far otherwise was cast the lot of France under the Republican chiefs who now had clothed themselves with the supreme power to direct all her affairs. The system of intimidation which had raised them to their "bad eminence," was now pursued to retain it, by crushing first, next by exterminating, all the leading men among their rivals or their adversaries. But they began with the royal family; hoping to strike an universal terror into their opponents by the signal example of a king sacrificed to the prevailing faction among his people; not, however, before they had issued a decree, unexampled in the history of the world, by which they promised the aid of their victorious arms to whatever nation chose to throw off the yoke of its rulers, and establish a republican government in the stead of its ancient monarchical institutions. It was thus the declared resolution of the French leaders not only to annihilate all opposition at home among the Royalist party, but to surround their new republic with similar dynasties, in order to perpetuate the domination of their revolutionary principles by rendering them universal.

But although the death of the King had been resolved upon by the Jacobin leaders, and every

resource of the clubs and of the municipality was called forth to accomplish this purpose, the greatest difficulties were experienced in the Convention. To surmount these, attempts were made to prevent discussion, and come to an immediate vote. All means were resorted to for hampering the King in his defence. At last the speeches of the members were not permitted to be heard, but were ordered to be given in, written, that they might be read or printed. The able defence of the advocates, and the dignified demeanour of the illustrious victim, produced a great effect both on the Assembly and on the country at large. The Gironde party, which really had the majority in the Convention, were for the most part against a capital punishment; and if the vote had been taken on the sentence, before the vote upon the appeal to the Primary Electoral Assemblies, there cannot be a doubt that this appeal would have been carried in the event of a capital punishment being awarded in the first instance. But the leaders craftily prevented this result, which they foresaw; and the Convention, by a blunder perhaps unexampled in the proceedings of a great body of men acting in their deliberative capacity, suffered the question of the appeal to be decided before the facts were known, or the circumstances had occurred which were calculated most imperatively to govern its decision. Hence the jealousy of the primary

Assemblies, and the consciousness that, except in Paris and one or two other great towns, the majority would have voted for an absolute and entire acquittal, induced a great majority to negative the appeal, although a considerable majority would, in all probability, have preferred even that prospect of entire acquittal to the sentence of death, had there been no other alternative. Against the appeal there declared 424 to 283; the vote having been unanimous against an absolute acquittal. The sentence of death, when the votes came to be analyzed, appeared to have been carried only by the majority of five, 721 having voted out of the 750 who composed the Convention.* There cannot be a more striking proof how little the voice of the country at large went with the proceedings of the Republican leaders, than this large minority in an Assembly chosen under the powerful and universal influence of the clubs and the mobs, and sitting at Paris under the constant exertion of that influence in all its forms.

But the death of the King soon terminated all struggle between the moderate and the extreme parties, placing the former at the mercy of their adversaries in the Convention, and subjecting the

* One account made the majority five *against*, instead of *for* the sentence; this was certainly erroneous. Another result obtained was the bare majority of one in its favour. The majority of five given in the text is the result in which all are now well agreed.

Convention itself to the control of the clubs. The establishment of the Revolutionary Tribunal paved the way for this soon after the execution of the King. A body of six, acting alternately three and three, as judges, was appointed by the Convention, to try, with the assistance of a jury chosen by the electoral bodies, and of a public accuser named by the Convention. The jurisdiction of this dreadful tribunal extended over all political offences; and the Convention, rather than the public prosecutor, put parties upon their trial before it. The punishment of death was immediately after decreed by law, against all acts, all publications, all writings, tending to restore the monarchy or attack the Republican government; and the superintendence of the public safety was then confided to the celebrated Committee, which has already been mentioned as soon engrossing the whole executive power of the State.*

* *Salut public* has generally been rendered *public safety*; but the word was rather *salvation* of the public, and expressed, indeed, its eminent functions and extraordinary appointment, as if under a pressing exigency to rescue the State from perdition. It was appointed on the 6th of April, 1793, on the proposition of Isnard, one of the most able, daring, and enthusiastic of the Republican chiefs, and an adherent of the Gironde party, in whose proscription he shared, though he escaped death by flight. He was of a highly respectable family of Grasse, still among the first in that town. I have the pleasure of knowing them well, from living in their neighbourhood.

The Jacobins having in their hands the whole power of this Committee and of the Revolutionary Tribunal, delayed not to use it for the defeat, that is, the extermination of their opponents. After a struggle of a few months, they succeeded in putting the Queen to death by a mock trial before the Revolutionary Tribunal. By a like proceeding they put Custine, one of their very best generals, to death for having surrendered Valenciennes, when it was in fact taken by regular siege, if not by storm. They prevented a Royalist insurrection at Lyons by destroying a great part of that noble city, and massacreing many hundreds of its inhabitants. They procured the execution of the Gironde leaders, Brissot, Vergniaud, and twenty others; and they sacrificed in like manner to their thirst of vengeance and lust of power some of the most eminent soldiers and philosophers of France, Luckner, Houchard, Bailly, Lavoisier, to whom may be added Barnave, the successor of Mirabeau, as by far the greatest orator of the Assembly, and the virtuous and accomplished Rolands.

The destruction of the Brissotine or Gironde party left the Convention entirely under the power of the Jacobins; and it was now found that the Committee of Public Safety, while it ruled the State, exercising over the Convention an uncontrolled influence, had fallen under the power of Robespierre and two adherents, who proved his

devoted partisans on all occasions, Couthon and St. Just. The other members of the Committee confined themselves each to his particular department; thus Carnôt conducted the whole operations of the war, and with a success so brilliant, that the only legitimate influence possessed by the Committee rested upon the fame which they thus acquired in exalting the national glory. The terror which they inspired by the sanguinary proceedings of the Revolutionary Tribunal was no doubt the main source of their power. But it may well be questioned whether, without the victories of their armies on every part of their frontier from the Ebro to the Scheldt, they could have sustained their ascendancy; and it is certain that any great reverses, which should again have exposed the capital to the risk of invasion, would speedily have wrought their overthrow and opened men's eyes to the tyranny under which they were fain to crouch while danger was afar off.

Although Robespierre* was all-powerful in the Committee, resting as he did upon the Jacobin Club, over which he ruled with an absolute domi-

* As his rise had throughout been gradual, even slow, and aided by no sudden strokes of boldness, nor furthered by any brilliant talents, he only became a member of the Committee about the end of July, having before the 26th of that month belonged to the Committee of General Defence, which afterwards merged in that of Public Safety.

nion; and although the Committee exercised an equal sway over the Convention, which, however, gave its confidence to the genius and the boldness that directed all the executive councils, making the war an uninterrupted series of victories, there soon appeared among its members men, not belonging to the Committee, but eminent for their services in the Revolution, and distinguished for their capacity and disposition to assert their claims, and aspire to a share in the supreme power. It could not, indeed, be said that any regular party had been formed in opposition to the Committee of Public Safety, because the spirit of patriotism which generally prevailed, making men forget all but the interests of the country, that is, of the revolutionary system, rendered all faction odious, and branded it with the name of treason. Yet the Committee did not contain all the great men of the day; and the exclusion of some soon produced its wonted effect of sowing the seeds of discontent, leading towards resistance on the one side, and jealousy tending to persecution on the other. While such men as Danton,* Tallien, Camille Desmoulins, Bourdon de l'Oise, were deprived of all share in the government, the Triumvirate of

* Danton's exclusion, however, was voluntary: he had declined the proposal to be named upon the Committee, and sick of the excesses into which the Revolution was plunging, rather than alarmed at its prospects, had retired for some months to his native place, Arcis-sur-Aube.

Robespierre could not deem themselves secure. Accordingly, after the fall of the Gironde had been followed by continual trials and condemnations, terms almost convertible in those dismal times, when hundreds of victims had fallen a sacrifice to the dictator's thirst of power and dread of resistance, the kindlier nature of Danton, long outraged by such dreadful scenes, revolted, and Camille entirely joining him in these natural feelings, the tyrant became alarmed. An interview took place, at which their reconcilement was attempted by common friends, alarmed at so perilous an event as their open rupture must prove to the dominant party: Robespierre received Danton's representations with haughty reserve; showed no disposition to be cordially reconciled; indicated on the contrary an impression that the breach might widen without any loss to his party; and left Danton with such a conviction of his doom being sealed, that he said he perceived his fate approaching, but warned Robespierre that it would draw after it his own destruction. A remarkable incident occurred at this meeting. When Danton spoke of the innocent lives that had been sacrificed to the system of terror, Robespierre coldly asked, "Et qui vous aura dit qu'un seul innocent a péri?"—to which Danton, turning to the friend who had accompanied him, said, with a smile, the bitterness of which must have made a deep im-

pression on the relater, for all the histories, and memoirs, and treatises have noted it, "Qu'en dis-tu? Pas un innocent n'a péri!" ("There's for you! or, What say you to that? Not a drop of innocent blood has been shed!")

The sacrifice of Danton, Camille, and their friends, soon after put the seal upon the tyrant's power, and completed the subjection of the whole Convention, whose members, terrified at the approach of death, should they either differ or be suspected of differing with the Triumvirate, for the most part ceased to attend, insomuch that of the seven hundred and fifty composing it, not above two hundred usually appeared in their places. The executions now reached the enormous amount of fifty and sixty a-day; the most marvellous levity was shown in condemning and executing even persons against whom not the shadow of a proof was offered; constantly by mere mistake one was taken for another; sometimes persons were hurried into the fatal cart which conveyed the victims to the scaffold, merely because the appointed numbers were not complete. But the vilest passions of individuals were also gratified,—their malignant spite or their sordid avarice. It would be endless to recite the instances which abound of these things in this the darkest page of French history, which make even the days of St. Bartholomew assume a lighter aspect. Thus the parties to a bill of

exchange connected with counter-revolutionary proceedings were all brought before the tribunal, and all condemned to die in the mass. M. Berryer, a celebrated lawyer, and father of the famous Carlist leader in our times, happened to call on a notary named Martin, a highly respectable man, wholly unconnected with politics. A few hours after he had seen him in his office, M. Berryer met the cart carrying its miserable lading to the place of punishment, and to his unspeakable horror saw M. Martin among the victims. He was executed. On inquiry it was found that his name had been appended to the bill to authenticate a notarial act —that is, the protesting of the bill—with which therefore he not only had no more concern than the paper-maker or ink-seller, who had furnished the materials of the instrument, but he actually had rather been concerned in a proceeding against its validity. All the parties to it had been condemned in their absence; and the only question put to M. Martin was, whether he acknowledged his handwriting. On his answering in the affirmative, he was told that the sentence applied to him, and must be executed.* A respectable man, M. Frecot de Lantz, of eighty years old, bed-ridden for twenty years, and so deaf that he was wholly unable to hear the questions put at his trial, was condemned and executed for having

* Souvenirs de Berryer, vol. i. p. 218.

conspired against the republic. The public prosecutor, Coffinhal, among other rude and revolting pleasantries, said to the jury, "Il faut en finir. Vous voyez bien qu'il conspire *sourdement*."*

A wretch called Heron, a fraudulent bankrupt, who, driven to South America, brought back a fabricated order of the Spanish government for six thousand pounds, which no Paris banking-house would discount, denounced ten or twelve of the first bankers merely because they had refused to honour his forgery. Some were executed, others paid vast sums for their escape, Couthon declaring that the public "owed to Heron the discovery of some of the worst, because the wealthiest,† conspirators;" and another member of the Convention protesting that he never knew a better revolutionist.‡ For the escape of one banker, M. Magon de la Balue, an unknown person, bringing passports ready signed, but in blank, demanded twelve thousand pounds. It was refused, and the miserable man, against whom, except the miscreant Heron's tales, there existed not the shadow of a charge, much less any proof, was hurried to the scaffold.§ The incidents are

* Souvenirs de Berryer, p. 203.

† *Négotiantisme* was a known offence in the Reign of Terror, and meant to indicate the tendency of wealth towards regular and lawful government; just as *Modérantisme* was the offence of disliking anarchy, and violence, and blood.

‡ Souvenirs de Berryer, vol. i. p. 168.

§ Ibid., p. 173.

numberless of a similar malignant rancour, or sordid cupidity; and no doubt can remain of the facilities which the sanguinary course of the Committee afforded for gratifying all such vile propensities.

Then, as if the Revolutionary Tribunal afforded too little scope for the perpetration of wholesale murder, new expedients of blood were devised. A law was propounded to increase the number of victims, by making four Revolutionary Tribunals sit at the same time, and condemning persons without hearing their defence. It had, as early as October, 1793, been decreed that if any trial lasted three days and no sentence was passed, the tribunal might declare its conscience satisfied, close the proceedings, and pronounce judgment. In the June following came the consummation of injustice, the incredible law that if the tribunal was satisfied either with moral conviction or material proof, it might without evidence proceed to condemnation. Advocates were by the same infernal law denied to parties accused, for the reason assigned, that the patriotic jurors were the protectors of all patriots,*

* In Robespierre's hand-writing the draught was found of one of these detestable laws. Its preamble sets forth the delays which had occurred from the difficulty of convicting eminent persons, and the scope thus afforded to aristocratic tumults and counter-revolutionary intrigues; and it gives as the ground of the new law, that "it is at once absurd and contrary to the institution of the Revolutionary Tribunal to subject to eternal procedure crimes of which a whole nation

and that conspirators deserved no assistance! These laws soon raised the number of victims to seven and eight hundred in a month.*

is the denouncer, and the universe the witness."—It then requires the president to open the fourth day's sitting with a question to the jury, "Is their conscience sufficiently informed?" (*éclairée*); and on an affirmative answer, he is immediately to pronounce sentence. He is also peremptorily required to suffer no questions (*interpellations*), nor any other incident inconsistent with this law. (*Papiers Inédits*, vol. ii. p. 1.)

* In April, May, June, July, 1793, the number of executions was only 41. In the five following months it had risen to 206,—viz. four times as many. In the first three months of 1794 it was 281, or above double that of the former period. But it then went on awfully increasing, so that in May it was 324; in June 672; and in July 895, without reckoning Robespierre and his party, executed at the end of that month. As many as 67 perished in one day, 7th of July. It is a most remarkable fact that a very great proportion of the persons thus put to death were of the most obscure station, and many were women of very advanced age; nor can there be a doubt that the guillotine ministered to the craving of personal and family cupidity, or spite. In the provinces, especially in the south, the same bloody scenes were enacted: the fiery temperament of the people increasing in those parts the violence of faction. Some places are noted for the fury with which the passions were inflamed. At Orange near Aix, in Provence, the worst atrocities were perpetrated. The same place exposed Napoleon's life to imminent hazard when he made his retreat to Elba in 1814. In 1830, its people were so split into violent parties, that each family was divided against itself. Nor can the traveller at this day fail to mark, as he but passes, the fierce aspect of its inhabitants. The atrocities, however, committed by the

The revolutionary mode of proceeding, when once adopted at Paris, was extended to the tribunals in the provinces. Indeed we find the constitution of the revolutionary tribunal of Orange planned some weeks before the new system was established in the capital. These are the remarkable directions for its process—concise enough, and abundantly significant:—"Ce tribunal jugera révolutionnairement, sans instruction écrite, et sans assistance de jurés. Les témoins entendus, les interrogations faites, les pièces à charge lues, l'accusateur public entendu, le jugement sera prononcé."* There is an entire omission of the defence, and of all evidence in exculpation.—(*Papiers Inédits*, vol. i. p. 101.) It is remarkable that though the six members to compose this sanguinary court were carefully selected, with power to divide themselves into two courts for expediting their horrid business, not many days elapsed before some of them showed symptoms, if not of tenderness, yet at least of regard for justice, and

monster Carrier at Nantes, where the Loire was literally dyed with Royalist blood, have long attained the dreadful eminence of almost making the other cruelties of the time be forgotten.

* "This tribunal shall try in the revolutionary manner, without written indictment, and without jury. After hearing the witnesses, interrogating the accused, reading the documents in support of the charge, and hearing the public prosecutor, sentence shall be pronounced."

of reluctance to commit wholesale murder. The president, Fauvetz, writes to Payan, the national agent of the municipality of Paris, who suffered with Robespierre, that their proceedings, though affording a brilliant contrast with that of the Tribunal of Nîmes—having in six days sentenced 197 persons, which was more than they had done at Nîmes in as many months—were yet hampered and thwarted by the over-scrupulous nature of three of their members; one of whom, Fonrosa, is too fond of forms, and though an "excellent person, yet falls somewhat short of the revolutionary point:" another, Meilleret, "utterly useless in the post he fills, so far as sometimes to acquit counter-revolutionary priests, and to require proofs of guilt, as in the ordinary courts of the old régime."—"God grant," ejaculates the pious chief judge, "that Ragot, Ternex, and myself, who are up to the right pace (qui sommes au pas), may not be taken ill! Should such a misfortune happen, the tribunal would only distil pure water, and be at best on a level with the ordinary courts of the country."

This account of the peculiar structure of Fonrosa's understanding, which made him slow in putting innocent men to death, drew from Payan a most warm but affectionate remonstrance; which we find among the documents appended to Courtois's Report. After referring to his own long experience in such proceedings, he earnestly be-

seeches him to consider the entire difference between a revolutionary and an ordinary tribunal; that it is wholly immaterial to ask whether or not the accused has been heard patiently, and at length, in his defence; but only whether he is guilty or not: and that in considering this the judge's conscience is to stand in the place of all the old forms. He exhorts him not to be afraid of the innocent suffering, but only of the guilty escaping; affirming that whoever has not been for the Revolution has been against it, and simply because he has done no public service: and he reminds him that whoever escapes punishment will one day be the death of many Republicans. In fine, he tells him, "You have a great mission to fulfil. Forget that nature has made you a man, and endowed you with feelings" (Oublie que la nature te fit homme et sensible): "remember that all those who affected to be wiser and more just than their colleagues were either crafty conspirators or weak dupes, unworthy of the Republic; and choose between the love and the hatred of the people." He closes this singular letter by professions of the purest esteem, which, he says, has dictated it, and by calling on his correspondent to read it over and over again (*sans cesse*), and "especially before trying the wretches whom he has to destroy."—(*Rapport de Courtois*, p. 397.) Fonrosa's answer to this letter, justifying himself, would seem to show that there was but a

slender foundation for the charge made against him. He only appears to have required that some note should be kept of the names and designations of the parties tried, of the heads of the charges, and of the principal points of the evidence. The small number of clerks, however, rendered this a serious interruption to the work of blood; and hence the impatience of all such formalities testified by the chief judge, to whose letter of complaint I have adverted.

It is needless to multiply examples: but the proceedings at Lyons require a few words. We have, among many other records of these tragical scenes, the correspondence of the principal actor in them, Collot d'Herbois. To some of the letters Fouché's name is also appended; but he has, in private at least, positively denied the authenticity of the subscription, as we shall afterwards see in Lord Stanhope's valuable note.

The accomplishment of Collot's grand object, the destruction of Lyons, is obstructed by the vast number of the inhabitants—150,000; and both he and Couthon are found planning the dispersion of some 100,000 of them over the country, where they might mingle with the Republican population, and become partakers of its civic virtues. However, as far as man could act in such circumstances, Collot boasts of his progress; and he lays down his principles:—"We have revived the action of a

Republican justice," he says, "prompt and terrible as the will of the people! It must strike traitors like the lightning, and only leave their ashes in existence! In destroying one infamous and rebellious city, you consolidate all the rest. In causing the wicked to perish, you secure the lives of all generations of freemen. Such are our principles. We go on demolishing, with the fire of artillery and with the explosion of mines, as fast as possible. But you must be sensible that, with a population of 150,000 inhabitants, these processes find many obstacles. The popular axe cuts off twenty heads a-day, and still the conspirators are not daunted. The prisons are choked with them. We have erected a Commission, as prompt in its operations as the conscience of true Republicans trying traitors can possibly be. Sixty-four of these were shot yesterday on the spot where they had fired on the patriots; two hundred and thirty are to fall this day in the ditches where their execrable works had vomited death on the Republican army. These grand examples will have their effect with the cities that remain in doubt; where there are men who affect a false and barbarous sensibility, while ours is all reserved for the country."*

* The admixture of private with public feeling is found in this, as in all the other pieces of the Jacobin correspondence; and Robespierre, generally called "*Maximilien*," or "*Our dear Maximilian*," is the object of constant solicitude and tenderness.

"All

Such, in Paris and the provinces, were the proceedings of the Reign of Terror, while the Triumvirate, Robespierre, Couthon, St. Just, bore sway, until at length the discovery of a list, in which many deputies were proscribed and marked for execution, roused the Convention from its slumber of fear, overthrew the tyrants, and restored something like security and freedom to the legislature and the people of Paris, while the analogous proceedings of the provincial clubs and tribunals were also suspended.

We may now pause awhile to contemplate the character, intellectual as well as moral, and to scan the views of the singular men who played the chief parts in that terrible drama, of which we have been observing the successive scenes. And of one thing we may rest fully assured, that they commit a great mistake who ascribe, as was very generally done at the time, no motives but those of mere sanguinary cruelty or insane ambition to their con-

"All those," continues Collot, "who have traversed the revolution with a firm step (that is, unruffled by 'false and barbarous sensibility') are inseparably united together. It is the love of their country that cements the fraternal friendship which knits their hearts together. Give the assurance of my friendship, entire and unalterable, to your Republican family. Squeeze, in my name, Robespierre's hand. Your son, a good citizen, a happy father, already strong in the principles in which he has been brought up," &c. "What a satisfaction for Republicans, the fulfilment of these duties!"

duct. That with most of them their proceedings degenerated into such courses—that the more savage and selfish parts of their nature finally prevailed, and bore them away from every humane affection or virtuous principle, may be very true; and yet most of them began with being the dupes of exaggerated patriotism and public spirit, the sport of a political and philosophic fanaticism; and it was only after these dangerous excesses had steeled their minds against the ordinary impulses of our nature, that they gave themselves up to the propensities of a more vulgar ambition, and indulged in the more common gratification of personal hatred or vengeance. That a familiarity with scenes of blood, both in the field and on the scaffold, had produced its natural effect in hardening the heart, and that the fanatical sentiments of enthusiasm had borne their appointed fruit, of making the sufferings and even extinction of others disregarded when they were the means working towards the end so vehemently desired, can nowise be doubted.

The records of the Reign of Terror bear constant witness to these positions. But perhaps no such testimony is stronger than that of the correspondence published after Robespierre's downfall in May, 1794; to parts of which I have already referred. The Committee of Public Safety had, according to its usual policy of having an emissary

to aid or to control the national representative in every important place, sent M. Julien to Bordeaux, where Ysabeau was suspected of being lukewarm, and to Nantes, where Carrier had rendered himself remarkable for an unscrupulous excess of zeal—an excess, however, which does not appear to have created any very unfavourable feelings towards him on the part of the executive government. We find this emissary writing confidentially to Robespierre respecting the monster Carrier and his atrocious murders; but not a word of execration finds or forces its way into his narrative. He speaks of Royalist soldiers butchered, and of the Loire flowing red with blood; but it is only to express his sorrow for the pestilence engendered by the heaps of corpses, and for the impediments occasioned to the navigation of the river. Whether it be that he dared not reprobate the acts of patriotic butchery, even in writing to his colleague, for fear his letter should be read, and expose him to the fury of zealous citizens, or that he really was callous to all feelings of humanity, needs hardly be inquired into; the inference is the same on either supposition.* The same silence is to be remarked

* Papiers Inédits trouvés chez Robespierre, vol. iii. p. 44. This work is of the deepest interest. When the Triumvirate were overthrown at the revolution of the 9th and 10th Thermidor, there were found many papers in the repositories of Robespierre, St. Just, and others. A committee was charged to draw up a report, and Courtois made it to the Convention.

in the correspondence respecting Collot d'Herbois's massacres at Lyons; or rather, Julien brings it as a charge against Ysabeau that he had spoken disrespectfully of those celebrated *fusillades*.* A like remark arises upon a fact communicated by Lord Stanhope, which the reader will find in his interesting notes upon Fouché. When that famous revolutionary leader was denying his share in the proceedings at Lyons, and was reminded of the reports published in his name jointly with his associate Collot, his answer was that "to have merely contradicted his having the share ascribed to him in the massacres would have exposed him to destruction,"—that is, because it would have betokened a disapproval and repudiation of the honour intended to be done him.

But though all these scenes ended in perverting the nature of the actors, and even in some degree of the spectators, the chiefs of the Revolution were originally of a better temper, and actuated by purer feelings. This is even, to a certain extent, true of Robespierre, the most remarkable of them all; but it is true of him in a very much lesser measure than of any other revolutionary chief except St. Just.

It was printed in one volume. But in 1828 the suppressed papers were published in three volumes, with Courtois's Report.

* Papiers inédits trouvés chez Robespierre, vol. iii. p. 27.

LONDON

ROBESPIERRE.

It would be difficult to point out within the whole range of history, ancient or modern, any person who played so great a part as Robespierre with so little genius. Those who were not brilliant, whose parts were not such as dazzle the vulgar, and thus, by bestowing fame and influence, smooth the way to power, have generally possessed some depth of intellect, some mental force which compensated, and far more than compensated, the want of shining faculties; or, if their intellectual endowments were moderate, they have by a splendid courage struck awe into the hearts of mankind; or at least by extraordinary vigour and constitutional firmness of purpose, they have overpowered, though more slowly, all resistance to their will, and with constancy won their way to the head of affairs. Nor are instances wanting, and perhaps Henry IV. of France is the most remarkable, of amiable dispositions gaining the affections of men, and making up for the want of any very extraordinary gifts either of a moral or an intellectual kind. But in Robespierre we can trace not a vestige of any such

kinds of excellence, if it be not that he was unremitting in his pursuit of aggrandisement, and had as much firmness in this regard as was consistent with a feeble and cowardly nature. Nor is the secret of his rise to be found in the circumstances of the times; these were common to all candidates for power; and he who outstrips all competitors must have some superiority over them, natural or acquired, to account for his success.

It may be admitted, in all probability, that his vices had in the peculiar crisis a chief part in the mastery which he obtained; and his early possession of a secret more imperfectly known to others, perhaps only to him in its entirety, was that which, when coupled with those great vices, enabled him to act his extraordinary part. He, from the dawn of the Revolution, saw with perfect clearness and precision the disposition of the multitude to be roused, their power when excited, and the manner in which to excite them most surely. He perceived with unerring certainty the magical effect of taking extreme courses, gratifying their disposition to excess, freeing them by removing all restraints, and, above all, avoiding the risk of quenching the flame by any interposition of moderate councils, any thwarting of the spirit that had been raised. The perfectly unscrupulous nature of his mind, the total want of all kindly or gentle feelings, the destitution of even common

humanity when the purpose of gratifying the propensity to violence was to be accomplished, and the superadded excitement of the war to make the mob first his tools, and then his slaves, enabled him to satiate that thirst, first of destruction, then of fame, which swiftly became a fiercer thirst of power, and while it could hardly be slaked by any draughts of the intoxicating beverage, clothed him with the attributes of a fiend towards all who either would interrupt or would share his infernal debauch.

The frame of his mind was eminently fitted for sustaining as well as devising the part which he played. From his earliest years he had never been known to indulge in the frolics or evince the gaiety of youth. Gloomy, solitary, austere, intent upon his work, careless of relaxation, averse to amusement, without a confidant, or friend, or even companion, it is recorded of him that at the College of Louis le Grand, where he was educated with Camille, Fréron, and Le Brun, he was never seen once to smile. As a boy and a youth he was remarkable for vanity, jealousy, dissimulation, and trick, with an invincible obstinacy on all subjects, a selfishness hardly natural, a disposition incapable of forgiving any injury, but a close concealment of his resentment till the occasion arose of gratifying it, and till he dared to show it in safety. It would have been difficult to bring into the tempest of the

Revolution qualities more likely to weather its fury, and take advantage of its force; but he lacked the courage which alone can enable any man long to "ride in the whirlwind and direct the storm;" for his nature was essentially base and timid, the frame of his body corresponding to the paltriness of his soul. Nature had likewise given warning to the beholder by marking his aspect with a singular ugliness and meanness, which the ravages of the small-pox rendered still more forbidding.

With these defects, and that entire want of generous, or kindly, or even ordinarily human feelings which they betoken or cause, he possessed some qualities which mainly contributed to his elevation, first from the obscurity of a not very eminent practitioner at the not very celebrated bar of Arras, to distinction in the Constituent Assembly; and afterwards from the position of a second-rate debater* to the supreme power in the state, which he wielded during by far the most critical period of French history in any age. His thirst, first of distinction to gratify his inordinate vanity, and then of power to feed the ambition that had grown up in so rank and poor a soil, was inordinate, and, possessing his whole soul, left no place for any rival principle of action, no avenue open to any natural feeling which might dispute

* This underrating applies to his powers as a debater only. His eloquence was unquestionable as a speaker.

for mastery with the ruling passion. From his earliest years, when the question was merely of vanity, this was his nature; and viewing all rivals, all obstacles, as only to be extirpated and destroyed, he would have killed, if he dared, the competitors for a college prize or a school reward, as remorselessly as he afterwards exterminated the Brissots, the Héberts, and the Dantons, who crossed the path of his ambition. Vanity often prepares the soil for ambition; but generally like a crop which is to be consumed before the more important growth begins, with which that base weed seldom is seen to grow up. But the personal conceit of Robespierre kept pace with his love of dominion; affronts offered to it caused many of his murders; nay, its indulgence seriously affected his power, and it is more than probable hastened his downfall. For the festival in honour of the Supreme Being, the precursor of his fate, and a main assistance to his enemies, was wholly unnecessary for re-establishing religion, and, except ministering to his personal vanity, gained no object but that of exciting distrust and alarm among the infidel parts of the community, without at all reconciling the votaries of Christianity.

From the entire occupation of his mind by the prevailing propensity, proceeded, of course, his exclusive devotion to its gratification.* It may

* My late learned and able friend M. Lakanal, in his valu-

be questioned whether in the whole course of his life Robespierre was for an instant unoccupied with the subject—whether he ever wasted one thought upon any other. The effect of this absolute devotion is incalculable. It supplies many deficiencies; it gives force to very moderate strength of mind; it calls forth the whole resources of the individual; it nerves the faculties with a vigour for want of which far ampler powers are paralyzed; as an insignificant bullet fired from a gun will destroy, when a cannon-ball thrown by the hand falls innocuous at the feet of the object.

From the same exclusive devotion to the one pursuit of his whole existence arose also the utter disregard of all other gratifications, aided possibly by an extremely cold temperament. With the exception of wine, in which he at one period of his life indulged, in order, probably, to soothe his constitutional irritability, and assist the morbid digestion that shed a sallow hue over his repulsive features, he never was known to partake of any sensual indulgence.* But the austerity of the

able notes upon his Colleagues of the Revolution, heads a few remarks on Robespierre with this line—

"Hoc genus est hominum cupiens præcellere cunctis;"

as if he deemed personal vanity the distinguishing characteristic of the dictator's nature.

* A connexion has been supposed to have existed between him and the daughter of the family with which he lodged; but the evidence of this is too slight to be relied on.

republican character, which he so greatly affected, also precluded all ordinary pleasures; and he carried this, which cost him nothing, to the same excess with most of his colleagues, excepting only that, in the article of dress, his petty personal vanity made him shun the squalid attire of the other Jacobins, and affect something of the old garb of good society. Nay, his room, a handsome *boudoir*, was filled with pictures, prints, and busts of his own frightful person; and he is supposed to have worn green spectacles for the purpose of concealing the timid movements of his eyes.* Avarice he had none, not because with his habits money was an useless incumbrance, for we often see the passion of acquiring keep such pace with that of hoarding wealth, that all use of the treasure so keenly sought after is out of the question; but avarice was no vice or weakness of his, and it would have been as hard to bribe him from his path with money as to make him compromise his principles, or assumed principles, for place.

He soon acquired, and even retained, the name so popular at all times, in revolutions so omnipotent, of "*Incorruptible*."† How came it to pass that

* The *Mémoires de Barbaroux*, p. 63, give a similar account of his *boudoir*, but deny the statement of Helen Maria Williams, that his sight was good, and required no glasses.

† I have not thought it worth while in the text to make any remark upon the only pretence anywhere to be found

while all, or nearly all, were equally careless of money; while the terrible Committee, with the disposal of uncounted millions, limited their whole

of a charge against Robespierre's honesty in money matters. It is a letter printed in the Report of Courtois, as having been found among his papers; and it is evidently a fabrication. The reader will find it at p. 221, forming the lxi. piece of the Appendix; it is also given in the *Papiers Inédits*, tom. ii. p. 156. It purports to be a letter from some one unknown, at some place also unknown, respecting funds supposed to have been intrusted to him for the purpose of facilitating Robespierre's escape. The first sentence convicts its author of gross and daring forgery. Who in such circumstances would do more than allude to the funds under his care? But the writer is made to say, "les effets que vous m'avez fait adresser pour continuer le plan de faciliter votre retraite dans ce pays-ci"—(the money you sent me in order to carry on the plan of facilitating your escape into this country). He then speaks of Robespierre as about to fly from a "theatre where he must soon appear and disappear for the last time;" and goes on to show him how near the scaffold the elevation to the chair of the Convention (probably meaning at the festival in honour of the Deity) had brought him. It proceeds thus: "Since you have succeeded in providing yourself here with a large sum (*un trésor*) sufficient to support you for a long time, as well as those for whom I have received money from you, I shall expect you impatiently, that we may laugh together over the part you will have played in a nation as credulous as it is fond of novelty." Surely a more gross and clumsy fabrication never was attempted, nor does its publication reflect credit either on the Government that published it, or the Report in which it appeared. The improbability of Robespierre's keeping such a letter in his repositories is of itself sufficient to destroy its credit.

salary and whole expenditure to eight shillings a-day, and all ended their lives in the greatest distress—he alone should be called the "*Incorruptible?*" The reason is to be sought for elsewhere than in the freedom from pecuniary corruption; for his possessing the feature common to them all never would have formed a mark of distinction. But as he had early perceived the power of the people—that is, the power of the multitude acting on or overawing the people; so had he observed almost as early the favour in their eyes of extreme courses; of the unhesitating pursuit of one principle without the least deviation to suit the temporary purposes of expediency, or the least temporizing to consult prudential views, whether of individual advantage or of public safety; and he saw that as whoever most rigidly conformed his course to this canon, so whoever went further than others, outbidding them in violence and in blindness to all the advantages of compromise, was sure to carry away the chief favour of the unreflecting multitude. By this view was his conduct always guided; and as the people were ever sure to find him foremost among the more violent, ever at the head of those who would sacrifice all considerations to the favourite maxims, falsely called the *principles*, of the day—laying all prudence on the shelf—giving moderation to the winds—flinging peace to the dogs, the dogs of war—now crying

"*perish the colonies*,"—now, "*perish commerce*" —and ever ready to wade through blood, the best blood of France, towards the attainment of the darling equality and unbridled licence of the multitude—he was for this hailed as the "*Incorruptible*" that no one could ever doubt on any question which side he would take, and no one could expect others to outstrip his zeal and determination.

There remain some remarkable proofs and illustrations, of unquestionable authenticity (for they are under his own hand), of the extremes to which he had made up his mind, and the enmity which he bore to all the reputable classes of society. The correspondence of his emissaries in various quarters is filled with the like indications. Aristocracy, counter-revolutionary principle, royalism itself, appear not to excite more alarm and hostility among them than mere wealth ; and hence *négotiantisme* equally with *modérantisme* is taken for a sure symptom of *incivisme*, and places those who have it alike under grave suspicion. The design of a crusade against property, a general levelling of condition as well as an equality of all civil rights, has been often imputed to Robespierre, and apparently without sufficient foundation. It is certain that such a scheme, an agrarian division of property, was one of the main tenets of the Hébertiste or Cordelier party, against whom he made the greatest exertions, exertions which speedily led to their destruction. But

his hatred of the middle classes, and constant appeals to the multitude against the *bourgeoisie*, can in nowise be doubted; and it forms the burthen of his song in many pieces found after his death. Thus, in a kind of civic catechism we find the question, "Who are our enemies?" answered with "The vicious and the wealthy." Again, "What favours their attacks upon us?"—"The ignorance of the multitude, or lower classes" (*sans-culottes.*) In another piece we find this doctrine—"Les dangers intérieurs viennent des bourgeois; pour vaincre les bourgeois il faut rallier le peuple—tout étoit disposé pour mettre le peuple sous le joug des bourgeois—ils ont triomphé à Marseille, à Bordeaux, à Lyon; ils auroient triomphé à Paris sans l'insurrection actuelle. Il faut que l'insurrection actuelle continue—il faut que le peuple s'allie à la Convention, et que la Convention se serve du peuple—il faut que l'insurrection s'étende de proche en proche sur le même plan; que les sans-culottes soient payés et restent dans les villes. Il faut leur procurer des armes, les colerer, les éclairer."*

* "Our internal perils arise from the middle class; to overcome that class we must rally the people. Everything was prepared for subjecting the people to the yoke of the middle class; that class has triumphed at Marseilles, at Bordeaux, at Lyons; it would have triumphed at Paris, but for the present insurrection. This insurrection must continue. The people must ally itself with the Convention, and the Convention must make use of the people. The insurrection

Of the talents of Robespierre I have already spoken in general; but it remains to examine a little more in detail his claims of distinction as a speaker and a writer. There is some difficulty in separating the two characters, because in his time written speeches were far more frequently used than spoken; yet we are not left without proofs of his powers as an orator.

It has been customary with contemporary authors, and especially with those of our own country, to rate his capacity very low; and some with whom I have conversed of his colleagues, represent him as a cold and very second-rate speaker *(médiocre)*, whose oratory consisted in a tissue of common-places, with dissertations on virtue, crime, conspiracy, though with a prevailing vein of sarcasm and considerable power of epigram or antithesis. These have described him as very barren of ideas, and by no means possessing facility of composition—which indeed the manuscripts found on his death seemed to prove by the constant and repeated alterations that prevailed through them all. It is to be observed, on the other hand, that General Carnôt expressly gave as one of the means by which he rose to power, his facility of speech and of composition:

must spread gradually on the same plan; the lower classes must be paid to remain in the houses; they must be furnished with arms, enraged, enlightened."—*Papiers Inédits*, vol. ii. pp. 13, 15.

" D'abord (I remember he said) il avoit les paroles à la main." Nor can we rely much in opposition to this upon the undoubted fact that, when accused by Louvet and Barbaroux, he asked for a week to prepare his defence. The delay in all probability had a very different object from that of making his speech. He was willing that the impression produced by the charges, and by the ability shown in their support, should be allowed to wear out at a time when sudden resolutions were not so often taken as afterwards, and therefore he could safely postpone his defence; and above all he was most likely working with his faithful Jacobins, to defeat the accusation and carry him through, whatever might be the effect of the debates in the Convention.

It seems, however, that we are not left to conjecture on his powers as a speaker, even as a debater. Inferior he certainly was to the greatest who appeared in the Revolution, as Mirabeau, Barnave his successor, and Vergniaud, perhaps the highest of the three. But we have abundant proof of his coming very near them, at least in effective declamation, and proof that in readiness he was not easily surpassed. Let two instances suffice; but they are remarkable ones, and they are decisive.

Dupont, an adherent of the Lameth party, used insulting gestures towards him. He calmly said, addressing the chair, " M. le Président, je vous prie

de dire à M. Dupont, de ne pas m'insulter, s'il veut rester auprès de moi." Then turning alternately to Dupont and the Lameths, he proceeded:

"Je ne présume pas qu'il existe dans cette Assemblée un homme assez *lache*, pour transiger avec la cour, sur un article de notre code constitutionnel (all eyes were fixed on the party of Lameth)—assez *perfide* pour faire proposer par elle des changemens nouveaux, que la pudeur ne lui permettroit pas de proposer lui-même (much applause and looks again directed towards Dupont and the Lameths)—assez *ennemi de la patrie* pour chercher décréditer la constitution parcequ'elle mettroit quelque borne à son ambition ou à sa cupidité (more applause)—assez *impudent*, pour avouer aux yeux de la nation qu'il n'a cherché dans la révolution que des moyens de s'aggrandir et de s'élever. Car je ne veux regarder certains écrits et certains discours qui pourroient présenter ce sens, que comme l'explosion passagère du dépit déjà expié par le repentir. Non; du moins nous ne serons ni assez stupides, ni assez indifférens, pour consentir à être le jouet éternel de l'intrigue, pour renverser successivement les diverses parties de notre ouvrage au gré de quelques ambitieux." Then raising his voice, "Je demande que chacun de vous jure qu'il ne consentira jamais à composer avec le pouvoir exécutif sur aucun article de la constitution sous peine d'être déclaré traître à la nation." The effect of this speech was

electrical, as may well be imagined. The Lameth party had long been on the decline, and this proved their destruction.

The great struggle between the Mountain and the Gironde began with a debate in which Robespierre made a very successful attack upon them; but Vergniaud's reply, notwithstanding the extreme applause which attended his adversary's, greatly exceeded it in power, and won over even many of the Mountain to his side. Very different was the result of the hot conflict between the same redoubtable chiefs on the famous 31st of May, 1793. While Robespierre was going on, "Non! il faut purger l'armée! Il faut"—Vergniaud impatiently interrupted him with "Concluez donc"—whereupon Robespierre instantly turned on him, and continued, "Oui! je vais conclure, et contre vous!—contre vous, qui, après la révolution du 10 Août, avez voulu conduire à l'échafaud ceux qui l'ont faite!—contre vous, qui n'avez cessé de provoquer la destruction de Paris!—contre vous, qui avez voulu sauver le tyran!—contre vous, qui avez conspiré avec Dumouriez!—contre vous, qui avez poursuivi avec acharnement les mêmes patriotes dont Dumouriez demandait la tête!—contre vous, dont les vengeances criminelles ont provoqué les mêmes cris d'indignation dont vous voulez faire un crime à ceux qui sont vos victimes! Eh bien! ma conclusion c'est le décret d'accusation contre tous les

complices de Dumouriez, et contre tous ceux qui ont été désignés par les pétitionnaires!" The Gironde party were undone; Brissot and twenty others of their leaders were immediately put on their trial, condemned, and executed.

No one at all acquainted with the rhetorical art can deny to these passages merit of the highest order. Above all, no one acquainted with the conduct of debate can doubt that they are precisely the kind of passages most surely calculated to awaken, to gratify, to control an assembly deliberating on the actual affairs of men. The speaker who thus delivered himself was plainly gifted with extraordinary eloquence; and however he may have dwindled down to a frigid, sententious, unimpressive rhetorician upon occasions of an *epideictic* kind, occasions of mere display like the fête in honour of the Supreme Being, or even when in the Convention his personal vanity and desire of oratorical renown made him overdo his part, it is certain that he was capable of excelling in the art; that he did excel on those great occasions which are fitted to call forth its highest displays; and, sure test of excellence, that he rose with the difficulties opposed to him, meeting with superior power the more pressing exigencies of the occasion.

That Robespierre may be tried by this test, we naturally turn to his great speech on the 8th Thermidor, the eve of his downfall; that speech of which

we shall presently see that Cambacérès pronounced a very high panegyric to Napoleon, himself rather disposed to admire the revolutionary Dictator. It is a production of the highest merit, and manifestly elaborated with extraordinary care as well as skill in oratory. The passage respecting the fête in honour of the Supreme Being is, for a popular Assembly, perhaps, too splendid, and might be deemed exaggerated; but the taste of the speech generally is correct and severe. That he had in various passages the masterpieces of the ancient orators in his mind, can admit of no doubt: but there is nothing to be seen like servile imitation; and even in the instance which most reminds us of the original ("Non! nous n'avons pas été trop sévères! J'en atteste la République qui respire! J'en atteste la représentation nationale environnée du respect dû à la représentation d'un grand peuple!"— and ending with "On parle de notre rigueur, et la patrie nous reproche notre faiblesse"), we find nothing nauseous in the imitation, but so fruitful a series of illustrations from the actual state of things, that all notion of pedantic recourse to Demosthenes is put to flight. There is also throughout the speech a tone of deep feeling, which was not natural to the speaker, and probably was awakened by the peculiarity of his unprecedented position, and the extreme singularity of the crisis in which he spoke.

Nor will the inference be in the least altered if

it shall be supposed that these great passages were not quite so extemporaneous as they at first seem to be. It may very possibly be suggested that, in anticipation of some such occasion, he might have been ready with a summary, a powerfully condensed and exquisitely-elaborated summary, of the charges against the party of the Lameths in the one case and of the Gironde in the other. The same may be said of many of the most brilliant and most successful feats of modern eloquence, as it may of all, or nearly all, the more exquisite oratory of the ancients. But the power of skilfully and suddenly adapting to the posture of the moment, and introducing and using naturally on the sudden, the fruit of previous study, is one of the most difficult parts of the orator's art; one which is the latest learnt and the most rarely employed with signal success. An examination of other parts of Robespierre's speeches has led me to the same conclusion to which a consideration of these passages plainly conducts us; and I conceive that his great eminence as a speaker and an occasional writer stands entirely indisputable.

It is known that he owed whatever success we allow him as a speaker to the indefatigable industry of his nature, which overcame the natural impediments of a harsh discordant voice, mean and hateful aspect, slow and hesitating enunciation. His first efforts were complete failures; failures suffi-

cient to dishearten any one not embarked in the quest of distinction with his whole heart, and concentrating all his force in that single pursuit. It was only by slow degrees that he became capable of drawing any attention—became tolerable to his audience. It was also by great labour that he continued to maintain his position as a speaker; and even when his facility had been exceedingly increased by diligent practice and by his eminent position, it was at all times by an effort that he accomplished his purpose. His whole manner was as bad as possible.*

Whether Robespierre originally had formed the design of rising to supreme power, or only began to conceive it after events which he could not foresee might seem to place it within his reach, has sometimes been made a question, and, as it appears to me, very erroneously. No person ever began his public life with such a plan by which to shape his conduct, and Robespierre most certainly only at first thought of making himself a name and a place among men of political eminence, nor dreamt of rising above all others until the events of August and September, 1792, gave him a prospect of such distinction. With the defects by which his progress was obstructed, his personal defects and want of physical as well as moral courage, any hopes of

* I have, from a most able and skilful critic in an exalted station, an accurate account of his voice and manner—nothing can possibly be worse.

overtopping all his more gifted competitors must at first have been wholly out of the question.

But it is a much more difficult matter to determine how far he originally felt any of the Republican enthusiasm, how far he really entertained any of the levelling principles, which inspired and guided the authors of the first Revolution. His nature was singularly alien from any warmth of temper likely to engender enthusiasm; yet he may, from his misanthropic feelings and hatred of all above him, have really acquired something like a zealous antipathy to the established institutions of the country, and something approaching to a fanatical desire for their subversion. It is very possible that at first such feelings may have influenced his conduct; and it is certain that the gratification of his prevailing propensities—first, the thirst of distinction, then the love of power—was quite compatible with indulging in these hostile feelings; nay, that the two indulgences were such as mutually to aid and to pander for each other. The political and religious enthusiasm which some lenient critics of his life have ascribed to him, had assuredly no other existence. It would be very greatly to exalt his character were we to give him credit for anything like fanaticism in the more ordinary acceptation of the term.

That he went fully into the system of proscription, at least for a certain period, cannot be doubted; but there seems every reason to disbelieve the remark

wittily made after Danton's death, "Que Robespierre avait mis la Convention en coupe réglée"—(that he treated the Convention like a forest which was to be cut down successively by fixed portions). On the contrary, it appears unquestionable that he had become really alarmed at the rapid progress of legal execution, and was desirous of stopping, but was embarrassed with the extreme difficulty and even danger of doing so, and thus was placed between two great perils, or two fears, when he found himself, like Macbeth—

> "So far in blood stept in,
> That turning were as tedious as go o'er."

His absenting himself for six weeks not only from the Convention, but from the Committee of Public Safety, attending the Jacobin Club alone, and preparing that extraordinary speech which he delivered on the day before his downfall, is a fact which cannot fail to operate in his favour; and although he most probably was kept informed, by Couthon and St. Just, of all that passed, he certainly has, in consequence of his absence, considerably less responsibility than his colleagues for the dreadful carnage which attended the close of the Decemviral reign. Napoleon told Mr. O' Meara, whose authority is wholly unimpeachable,* that he had himself seen

* I happen to know facts unknown to Mr. O' Meara when he was writing Napoleon's allusions to those same facts, *e. g.*

letters of Robespierre to his brother, representative of the people with the army of Nice, which proved his determination to bring the Reign of Terror to an end. That he was cut off in the midst of some such plan, which he wanted nerve to execute, is highly probable. That he was condemned without a hearing, and clamoured down by an intrigue of his colleagues Billaud and Collot, whose destruction he had planned, appears to be quite certain. When Cambacérès, an acute observer, and a perfectly candid witness, was asked his opinion of the 9th Thermidor by Napoleon, whose estimate of Robespierre was not unfavourable, he said, "C'était un procès jugé, mais non plaidé." And he added, that the speech of the day before, which began the struggle, was "filled with the greatest beauties" *(tout rempli des plus grandes beautés)*. To his habitual and constitutional want of courage it seems clear that the tyrant's fall must be ascribed. His heart failed not in the Convention when he vainly strove to be heard, and ended by exclaiming, "Encore une fois! Veux tu m'entendre, Président d'assassins?" But the moment was now past for resisting the plot of his adversaries, and saving himself by destroying them. He had not in time taken his line, which was to sacrifice Billaud and Collot, and perhaps Tallien; and then at once to close the

Secret Negotiations with Spain in 1806; and thus those allusions were to him unintelligible

Reign of Terror and abolish the Revolutionary Tribunal. This course required a determination of purpose and a boldness of execution which were foreign to his mean nature, happily for the instruction of mankind; because had he, like Sylla, survived the bloody tyranny in which he had ruled, and, much more, had he laid down the rod, like the champion of the Roman aristocracy, the world, ever prone to judge by the event, and to esteem more highly them that fail not, would have held a divided opinion, if not pronounced a lenient judgment upon one of the most execrable and most despicable characters recorded in the annals of our race.

In fine, that he was, beyond most men that ever lived, hateful, selfish, unprincipled, cruel, unscrupulous, is undeniable. That he was not the worst of the Jacobin group may also be without hesitation affirmed. Collot d'Herbois was probably worse; Billaud Varennes certainly, of whom it was said by Garat, "Il fauche dans les têtes, comme un autre dans les prés"—(he mows down heads as another would grass). But neither of these men had the same fixity of purpose, and both were inferior to him in speech. Both, however, and indeed all the revolutionary chiefs, were his superiors in the one great quality of courage; and while his want of boldness, his abject poverty of spirit, made him as despicable as he was odious, we are left in amazement at his achieving the place which he filled,

without the requisite most essential to success in times of trouble, and to regard as his distinguishing but pitiful characteristic the circumstance which leaves the deepest impression upon those who contemplate his story, and in which he is to be separated from the common herd of usurpers, that his cowardly nature did not prevent him from gaining the prize which, in all other instances, has been yielded to a daring spirit.

Such was Robespierre—a name at which all men still shudder. Reader, think not that this spectacle has been exhibited by Providence for no purpose, and without any use! It may serve as a warning against giving way to our scorn of creatures that seem harmless because of the disproportion between their mischievous propensities and their powers to injure, and against suffering them to breathe and to crawl till they begin to ascend into regions where they may be more noxious than in their congenial dunghill or native dust! No one who has cast away all regard to principle, and is callous to all humane feelings, can be safely regarded as innocuous, merely because, in addition to other defects, he has also the despicable weakness of being pusillanimous and vile.

LIBRARIES

DANTON.

A MAN of Robespierre's character, and with his great defects as a revolutionary chief, may be able to raise himself in troublous times to great eminence, and possibly even to usurp supreme power, but he never can take the lead in bringing great changes about; he never can be a maker of the revolutions by which he may however profit. His rise to distinction and command may be gained by perseverance, by self-denial, by extreme circumspection, by having no scruples to interfere with his schemes, no conscience to embarrass, no feelings to scare him; above all, by taking advantage of circumstances, and turning each occurrence that happens to his account. These qualities and this policy may even enable him to retain the power which they have enabled him to grasp; but another nature and other endowments are required, and must be added to these, in order to form a man fitted for raising the tempest, and directing its fury against the established order of things. Above all, boldness, the daring soul, the callous nerves, the mind

inaccessible to fear, and impervious to the mere calculations of personal prudence, almost a blindness sealing his eyes against the perception of consequences as well to himself as to others, is the requisite of his nature who would overturn an ancient system of polity, and substitute a novel regimen in its place. For this Robespierre was wholly unfit; and if any man can more than another be termed the author of the French Revolution, it is Danton, who possessed these requisites in perfection.

There can hardly a greater contrast be found between two individuals than that which this remarkable person presented in all respects to Robespierre. His nature was dauntless; his temper mild and frank; his disposition sociable; naturally rather kind and merciful, his feelings were only blunted to scenes of cruelty by his enthusiasm, which was easily kindled in favour of any great object; and even when he had plunged into bloodshed, none of the chiefs who directed those sad proceedings ever saved so many victims from the tempest of destruction which their machinations had let loose. Nor was there anything paltry and mean in his conduct on these occasions, either as to the slaughters which he encouraged or the lives which he saved. No one has ever charged him with sacrificing any to personal animosity, like Robespierre and Collot d'Herbois, whose adversaries

fell before the Revolutionary Tribunal, or those against whom offended vanity made them bear a spite; and it is certain that he used his influence in procuring the escape of many who had proved his personal enemies. His retreat to Arcis-sur-Aube, after his refusal to enter the Committee of Public Safety, and finally his self-sacrifice by protesting against the sanguinary course of that terrible power, leave no doubt whatever resting upon his general superiority in character and in feelings to almost all the other chiefs.

His natural endowments were great for any part in public life, whether at the bar or in the senate, or even in war: for the part of a revolutionary leader they were of the highest order. A courage which nothing could quell; a quickness of perception at once and clearly to perceive his own opportunity, and his adversary's error; singular fertility of resources, with the power of sudden change in his course, and adaptation to varied circumstances; a natural eloquence springing from the true source of all eloquence—warm feelings, fruitful imagination, powerful reason, the qualities that distinguish it from the mere rhetorician's art,—but an eloquence hardy, caustic, masculine; a mighty frame of body;* a voice overpowering all resistance;

* It was his own expression, "La Nature m'a donné en partage les forces athlétiques et la physiognomie âpre de la Liberté" (Nature has given me for my portion the athletic

these were the grand qualities which Danton brought to the prodigious struggle in which he was engaged; and ambition and enthusiasm could, for the moment, deaden within him those kindlier feelings which would have impeded or encumbered his progress to eminence and to power. That he was extremely zealous for the great change which he so essentially promoted, cannot admit of a doubt; and there is no reason whatever for asserting that his ambition, or any personal motive, overtopped his honest though exaggerated enthusiasm. The zeal of St. Just and Camille Desmoulins was, in all probability, as sincere as Danton's; but they, especially St. Just, suffered personal feelings to interfere with it, and control their conduct to a very much greater extent; and their memory, especially St. Just's, is exposed to far more reproach for their conduct in the bloody scenes to which the Revolution gave birth.

The speeches of Danton were marked by a fire, an animation, very different from anything that we find in those of Robespierre, and the other leaders of the Revolution, except perhaps Isnard, the most ardent of them all. In Danton's eloquence there appears no preparation, no study, nothing got up for mere effect. We have the whole heart of the man poured forth; and accordingly he rises upon

strength and harsh expression of Freedom.) He was marked with the small-pox like Robespierre, but had a masculine countenance, broad nostrils, forward lips, and a bold air wholly unlike his.

any incidental interruption, and is never confounded by any tumult or any attack. In one particular, as might be expected from his nature, he stands single among the great speakers of either France or England—the shortness of his speeches. They are, indeed, harangues prompted by the occasion; and we never lose the man of action in the orator. If we were to look for a specimen of his manner, perhaps none could be found better or more characteristic than his reply to the attack made upon him by Lasource, whom the Gironde put forward to charge him with his known partiality for Dumouriez. Danton was then the recognised leader of the Mountain; and the fierce struggle between that party and the Gironde having begun, the latter deemed it a great advantage to connect their adversaries, through him, with Dumouriez, whose treason was now avowed. The success of Danton's defence was complete, and paved the way for the subsequent denunciation of the Gironde. The speech is full of extempore bursts which have great merit, and produced an extraordinary impression. It may suffice to give the passage in which he denounced the Gironde. It follows his sudden retort on the cry that he was playing with Dumouriez the part of Cromwell. The success of that retort appears to have suggested and sustained the denunciation:—

"Si donc ce n'est que le sentiment profond de vos devoirs qui a dicté son arrêt de mort (Louis

XVI.); si vous avez cru sauver le peuple et faire en cela ce que la nation avait droit d'attendre de ses mandataires : ralliez-vous, vous qui avez prononcé l'arrêt du tyran, contre les lâches *(turning to the right—the Gironde)* qui ont voulu le sauver ; serrez-vous, appelez le peuple à se réunir en armes contre les ennemis du dehors, et écraser ceux du dédans ; confondez par la vigueur et l'immobilité de votre caractère tous les scélérats, tous les aristocrates, tous les modérés, tous ceux qui vous ont calomniés dans les départemens. Plus de composition avec eux ! *(Extraordinary applause, in which the galleries joined.)* Reconnaissez-le tous, vous qui n'avez jamais sû tirer de votre situation politique dans la nation le parti que vous auriez pu en tirer, qu'enfin justice vous soit rendue. Vous voyez par la situation où je me trouve en ce moment la nécessité où vous êtes d'être fermes, et déclarer la guerre à tous vos ennemis, quels qu'ils soient. *(Renewed applause.)* Il faut former un phalange indomptable. Ce n'est pas vous, puisque vous aimez les sociétés populaires et le peuple ; ce n'est pas vous qui voudrez un roi. *(More shouts ; loud cries of* Non ! non ! *from the great majority of the Convention.)* C'est à vous à en ôter l'idée à ceux qui ont machiné pour conserver l'ancien tyran. Je marche à la république —marchons-y de concert : nous verrons qui de nous ou de nos detracteurs atteindra le but."*

*" If, then, it be the profound sense of duty which dic-

The great power of this declamation is incontestable. His concluding sentence savoured of the exaggeration and defective taste which marked many of his harangues :—

"Je me suis retranché dans la citadelle de la raison ; j'en sortirai avec le canon de la vérité ; et je pulvériserai les scélérats qui ont voulu m'accuser."*

tated the condemnation of the King—if you conceived that you thereby saved the people, and thus performed the service which the country had a right to expect from its representatives—rally, you who pronounced the tyrant's doom ; rally round me against the cowards who would have spared him ; close your ranks ; call the people to assemble in arms against the enemy without, and to crush the enemy within ; confound, by the vigour and steadfastness of your character, all the wretches, all the aristocrats, all the moderates, all those who have slandered you in the provinces. No more compromise with them ! *(Immense applause, in which the galleries joined.)* Proclaim this, you who have never made your political position available to you as it ought to be, and let justice at length be done you ! You perceive, by the situation in which I at this moment stand, how necessary it is that you should be firm, and declare war on all your enemies, be they who they may. *(Renewed applause.)* You must form an indomitable phalanx. It is not you, who love the clubs and the people, that desire a King. (*Loud cries of* 'No ! No !') It is your part to root out such an idea from such as have contrived to save the former tyrant. For me, I march onwards to a republic ; let us all join in the advance ; we shall soon see which gains his object—we or our slanderers !"

* "I have entrenched myself in the citadel of reason ; I

Such violent metaphors of a vulgar class Danton could venture upon, from his thundering voice and overpowering action. In another they would have excited the ridicule from which those physical attributes rescued them in him.

A charge of corruption has often been brought against Danton, but upon very inadequate grounds. The assertion of Royalist partisans that he had stipulated for money, and the statement of one that he knew of its payment, and had seen the receipt (as if a receipt could have passed), can signify really nothing, when put in contrast with the known facts of his living, throughout his short public career, in narrow circumstances, and of his family being left so destitute that his sons are at this day leading the lives of peasants, or, at most, of humble yeomen, and cultivating for their support a small paternal farm in his native parish. The difference between his habits and those of the other great leaders gave rise to the rumours against his purity. He was almost the only one whose life was not strictly ascetic. Without being a debauched man, he indulged in sensual pleasures far more than com-

shall sally forth with the artillery of truth; and I shall crumble to dust the villains who have presumed to accuse me."

It must be remarked that such passages as the former, in all languages, are hardly possible to translate; for they are more or less conversational in their diction, and exceedingly idiomatic. The fustian of the last extract is more easy to render.

ported with the rigid republican character; and this formed one of the charges which, often repeated at a time when a fanatical republicanism had engendered a puritan morality, enabled Robespierre, himself above all suspicion of the kind, to work his downfall.*

The patriarchs of the Revolution, who till late survived, and whom I knew, such as M. Lakanal, always held Danton to be identified with the Revolution, and its principal leader. In fact, the 10th of August, which overthrew the monarchy, was his peculiar work. He prepared the movement, headed the body of his section (the Cordeliers) in their march first through the Assembly, demanding, with threats of instant violence, the King's deposition, then attacking the palace to enforce their requisition. When, soon after that memorable day, the Prussians were advancing upon Paris, and in the general consternation the Assembly was resolved to retreat behind the Loire, he alone retained his imperturbable presence of mind, and prevented a movement which must have proved fatal, because it would have delivered over Paris to the Royalists and the allied armies. The darkest page in his history, however, swiftly follows his greatest glory. He

* In a former volume I had expressed myself respecting Danton with a harshness which a more minute study of his conduct and character makes me regret.

was Minister of Justice during the dreadful massacres of September, and he was very far from exerting his power to protect the wretched victims of mob fury. On that occasion was pronounced his famous speech already cited on the necessity of bold measures—a speech by which he was long known, and will be long remembered, throughout all Europe. Other traits of his vehement nature are still recorded. When interrogated at his trial, his answer was, "Je m'appelle Danton; mon séjour sera bientôt le néant; mon nom vivra dans le panthéon de l'histoire." When taking leave of his young and fair wife, and for a moment melted to the use of some such expressions as, "Oh, ma bien aimée! faut-il que je te quitte?"—suddenly recovering himself, he exclaimed, "Danton, point de faiblesse! Allons en avant!"—And the same bold front was maintained to the end. His murder was the knell of Robespierre's fate; and while choked with rage on his own accusation, and unable to make himself heard, a voice exclaimed, "C'est le sang de Danton qui t'étouffe!" (It is the blood of Danton that chokes you!) But it must be admitted to have been a fine, a just, and an impressive lesson which, goaded by the taunt, the tyrant, collecting his exhausted strength for a last effort, delivered to his real accomplices, the pusillanimous creatures who had not dared to raise a hand, or even a voice, against Danton's murder—

"Lâches! que ne le défendiez-vous donc?" (Cowards! then why did you not defend him?) On the scaffold, where Danton retained his courage and proud self-possession to the last, the executioner cruelly and foolishly prevented him from embracing, for the last time, his friend Hérault de Seychelles, a man of unsullied character, great acquirements, and high eminence at the bar, as well as of noble blood :* "Fool!" exclaimed Danton indignantly, and with the bitter smile of scorn that often marked his features, "Fool! not to see that our heads must in a few seconds meet in that basket!"

The fall of Danton and of his faithful adherent Camille has ever been regarded as one of the most surprising events in the Revolution. His habitual boldness, and the promptitude with which he always took and pursued his course, seems for the moment to have forsaken him; else surely he could have anticipated the attack of the Committee, which was fully known before-hand. The Triumvirate had become generally the objects of hatred and of dread. The Gironde, though broken and dispersed, and hostile to Danton, as well as to the other partisans of the Mountain, were the last men to approve the course which had been followed since the de-

* He was nephew of Madame de Polignac, favourite and confidante of the Queen, through whose influence he had been appointed to a high legal situation.

struction of their leaders, and were anything but reconciled to mob government, which they had always detested and scorned, by the desperate excesses to which it had led. On the scattered fragments of that once powerful party, then, he might well have relied. Even if he was ignorant of the impatience which Tallien, Bourdon de l'Oise, Legendre, and others, felt under the Triumviral domination, and which the two former had not yet perhaps disclosed, he never could have omitted the consideration that some of them, especially Legendre, had before, and prematurely, given vent to their hostile feelings towards Robespierre, and were therefore sure to display them still more decidedly now that he was so much less powerful, and had so much more richly earned their aversion. As for the charges against Danton, they were absolutely intangible: the speech of Robespierre, and report of St. Just, presented nothing like substantial grounds of accusation, even admitting all they alleged to be proved. Their declamation was vague and puerile, asserting no offence, but confined to general vituperation; as that he abandoned the public in times of crisis, partook of Brissot's calm and liberticide opinions, quenched the fury of true patriots, magnified his own worth and that of his adherents: or flimsy and broad allegations of things wholly incapable of proof; as that all Europe was convinced of

Danton and Lacroix having stipulated for royalty, and that he had always been friendly towards Dumouriez, Mirabeau, and d'Orléans. The proposition of Legendre, to hear him before decreeing his prosecution, was rejected by acclamation; and the report of St. Just against him, though, by a refinement of injustice, as well as an excess of false rhetoric, addressed to him in one continued apostrophe of general abuse an hour long, was delivered and adopted in his absence, while he was buried in the dungeons of the state prison. The Revolutionary Tribunal, for erecting which he asked pardon of God and man, having nothing like a specific charge before them, much less any evidence to convict, were daunted by his eloquence and his courage, which were beginning to make an impression upon the public mind, when the Committee sent St. Just down to the Convention with a second report, alleging a new conspiracy, called the *Conspiration des Prisons*—an alleged design of Danton and his party, then in custody, to rush out of the dungeons, and massacre the Committee, the Jacobin Club, and the patriots in the Convention; liberate young Capet, that is, Louis XVII., and place him in Danton's hands. Upon this most clumsy fabrication, every word of which refuted itself, it was at once decreed that the tribunal should proceed summarily, and prevent any one of the accused being heard who should resist

or insult the national justice—that is, who should persist in asserting his innocence.* Sentence and execution immediately followed.

These circumstances make it apparent that Danton's supineness in providing for his own safety by attacking the Committee first, must have proceeded from the ascendant which the Triumvirate had gained over his mind. Originally he had a mean opinion of Robespierre, holding him void of the qualities which a revolutionary crisis demands. "Cet homme-là [was his phrase] ne saurait pas cuire des œufs durs"—(that man is incapable of boiling eggs hard). But this opinion was afterwards so completely changed, that he was used to say, "Tout va bien tant qu'on dira Robespierre et Danton; mais malheur à moi si on dit jamais Danton et Robespierre"—(all will go well as long as men say "Robespierre and Danton;" but woe be to me if ever they should say "Danton and Robespierre"). Possibly he became sensible to the power of Robespierre's character, for ever persisting in extreme courses, and plunging onwards beyond any one, with a perfect absence of all scruples in his remorseless career. But his dread of such a conflict as these words contemplate was assuredly much augmented by the feeling that the match must prove most unequal between his own

* This proceeding, of stopping the accused's mouth when on his trial, was termed putting a person *hors des débats*.

honesty and openness, and the practised duplicity of the most dark, the most crafty of human beings.

The impression thus become habitual on his mind, and which made him so distrustful of himself in a combat with an adversary like the rattlesnake, at once terrible and despicable, whose rattle gives warning of the neighbouring peril, may go far to account for his avoiding the strife till all precaution was too late to save him. But we must also take into our account the other habitual feeling, so often destructive of revolutionary nerves; the awe in which the children of convulsion, like the practisers of the dark art, stand of the spirit they have themselves conjured up; their instinctive feeling of the agonistic throes which they have excited in the mass of the community, and armed with such resistless energy. The Committee, though both opposed and divided against itself, still presented to the country the front of the existing supreme power in the state; it was the sovereign *de facto*, and retained as such all those preternatural attributes that "do hedge in" monarchs even when tottering to their fall: it therefore impressed the children of popular change with the awe which they instinctively feel towards the Sovereign People. Hence Danton, viewing in Robespierre the personification of the multitude, could not at once make up his mind to fly in the face of this dread power; and his hesitation

enabled his adversaries to begin the mortal fray, and win their last victory. Plainly, it was a strife in which the party that began was sure to carry the day.

The history of Danton, as well as that of Robespierre, both those passages wherein they were jointly successful, and those in which one fell beneath the power and the arts—the combined force and fraud—of the other, is well calculated to impress upon our minds that, in the great affairs of the world, especially in the revolutions which change its condition, the one thing needful is a sustained determination of character; a mind firm, persevering, inflexible, incapable of bending to the will of another, and ever controlling circumstances, not yielding to them. A quick perception of opportunities, a prompt use of them, is of infinite advantage; an indomitable boldness in danger is all but necessary: nevertheless Robespierre's career shows that it is not quite indispensable; while Danton's is a proof that a revolutionary chief may possess it habitually, and may yet be destroyed by a momentary loss of nerve, or a disposition to take the law from others, or an inopportune hesitation and faltering in recurring to extreme measures. But the history of all these celebrated men shows that steady, unflinching, unscrupulous perseverance—the fixed and vehement will—is altogether essential to success. "*Quod vult, id valde vult,*"

said one great man formerly of another, to whom it applied less strikingly than to himself, though he was fated to experience in his own person that it was far from being inapplicable to him of whom he said it. It was the saying of Julius Cæsar respecting Junius Brutus, and conveyed in a letter to one who, celebrated, and learned, and virtuous as he was, and capable of exerting both boldness and firmness upon occasion, was yet, of all the great men that have made their names illustrious, the one who could the least claim the same habitual character for himself. Marcus Tullius could never have risen to eminence in the Revolution of France, any more than he could have mingled in the scenes which disgracefully distinguished* it from the troubles of Rome.

* The only respect, perhaps, in which this can justly be asserted is the profanation of judicial forms, and the deliberate course of misrule pursued in France by the leaders, and submitted to by the people. The massacres of Marius and Sylla were far more sanguinary, but they were the sudden and passing effects of power—mere acts of military execution. The scene in France lasted much above a year.

LIBRARY

CAMILLE DESMOULINS.—ST. JUST.

The great leaders whom we have been contemplating had each a trusty and devoted follower, Danton in Camille, and Robespierre in St. Just; and these in some sort resembled their chiefs, except only that St. Just was more enthusiastic than Robespierre, and was endowed with perfect courage, both physical and moral.

Camille had long before the Revolution ardently embraced republican opinions, and only waited with impatience for an opportunity of carrying them into effective operation. He was a person of good education, and a writer of great ability. His works are, excepting the pamphlets of Sièyes, the only ones, perhaps, of that countless progeny with which the revolutionary press swarmed, that have retained any celebrity. The very names of the others have perished, while the periodical work of Camille, the *Vieux Cordelier*, is still read and admired. This exemption from the common lot of his contemporary writers, he owes not merely to the remarkable crisis in which his letters appeared,

the beginning of general disgust and alarm at the sanguinary reign of the Triumvirate; these pieces are exceedingly well written, with great vigour of thought, much happy classical allusion, and in a style far more pure than the ordinary herd of those employed who pandered for the multitude.

But the merit of Camille rises very much above any literary fame which writers can earn, or the public voice can bestow. He appears ever to have been a friend to milder measures than suited the taste of the times, and to have entirely agreed with Danton in his virtuous resistance to the reign of blood. At the very beginning of the Revolution he had contributed mainly to the great event which launched it,—the attack upon the Bastille. He harangued the people, and then led them on, holding two loaded pistols in his hands. He also joined Danton in the struggle which the Mountain made against the Gironde, and is answerable for a large share in the proscription of that party, firmly believing, as Danton did, that their views were not purely revolutionary, and that their course must lead to a restoration of the monarchy. He was at first, too, a promoter of mob proceedings and the mobs that regulated them, his nickname being the "Procureur Général de la Lanterne" (*Attorney-General of the Lamp-post*). But there ended his share in the bloody tragedy which followed; and he regarded with insurmountable aversion the

whole proceedings of the Triumvirate Nevertheless, Robespierre, who had resolved upon his destruction because of his intimate connexion with Danton, so far entered into his views of relaxing the speed of the proscriptions as to approve of the earlier numbers of the *Vieux Cordelier*, which he revised and corrected before their publication. There is even good reason for believing that Camille might have escaped the proscription which involved Danton and his party, through the disposition of Robespierre not having been very unfavourable to him, because it seems certain that his doctrine in favour of returning to more moderate courses was not so much dreaded by that terrible chief as by others, especially St. Just. But a sarcastic expression in which he indulged at the expense of that vain and remorseless fanatic sealed his doom. St. Just was always puffed up with his sense of self-importance, and showed this so plainly in his demeanour that Camille said he "carried his head like the holy sacrament" (*le Saint Sacrement*)—"and I," said St. Just, on the sneer being reported to him, which has the merit of giving a very picturesque description of the subject, "and I will make him carry his head like St. Denis," alluding to the legend of that saint having walked from Paris to his grave carrying his head under his arm.

Camille met death with perfect boldness, though

his indignation at the gross perfidy and crying injustice to which he was sacrificed enraged him so as to make his demeanour less calm than his great courage would have prescribed, or than his friend Hérault de Seychelles desired. "Montrons, mon ami," said he, "que nous savons mourir" (let us show, my friend, that we know how to die).

It is a remarkable circumstance in the history of Camille, that he was wholly precluded by an incurable hesitation from speaking in public, and consequently could take no part in debate. Nothing can show more conclusively than the station to which he rose in the annals of the Revolution, that oratory, mere speaking, bore a far more inconsiderable part in the conduct of affairs than it usually does in the administration of popular governments. The debates of the Convention were for the most part short, full of quick and sudden allusions, loaded with personalities and abounding in appeals to the popular feelings, but with few long or elaborate speeches. The principal pains appear to have been bestowed upon the reports of the Committees, which were eagerly listened to and produced a great effect, by the importance of their subjects and the authority of the bodies from whom they proceeded. In general, the debates resembled more the practical discussions of men engaged in action than the declamations

or the arguments of debaters. Thus oratory was of less avail than might have been expected in the action of so popular a government. It should seem that such a government must be settled before eloquence can have its full scope. "Pacis comes, otiique socia, et jam bene constitutæ reipublicæ alumna eloquentia." (*Cic.*) Other qualities raise a man above his compeers while the popular tempest rages. A fixed purpose, a steady pursuit of one object, an assurance given to the people that he may be relied upon at all times and to every extent, a constant security against all wavering, a certainty that no circumstances in his conduct will ever leave anything to explain or account for, nay, a persuasion that nothing unexpected by those whose confidence his past life has gained will ever be done, so as to excite surprise and make men exclaim, "Who could have thought it? This from him! Then what next?"—these are the qualities which far outweigh all genius for debate in the troublous times that try men's souls, fill all minds with anxiety, and open the door to general suspicion.

Without any gifts of wealth or of station, without even the common faculty of expressing himself in public, with no professional or other station to sustain him, a man necessarily unknown, at first altogether, and afterwards only known by his firm will, his devotion to republican principles, and his steady adhesion to one party and one chief, Camille

became one of the leading men in the Convention and the State, and had gained this high position before he was known as a writer of singular powers; for his celebrated letters were only produced towards the very close of his life. It was, no doubt, an additional cause of his elevation, and probably first recommended him to the public favour which he had so little means of improving, that he began early to support the revolutionary movement, and had, before the great events of 1789, declared himself a friend of republican principles. So it was with Couthon, a provincial advocate in Auvergne, and as unfitted for action by a paralytic stroke, which deprived him of the use of his limbs, as Camille was by the stutter which deprived him of the use of his tongue. Yet Couthon formed the third of the famous Triumvirate which exercised for above a year—an age in revolutionary times—the dictatorship of France. He is represented as a person of an engaging aspect and noble presence, notwithstanding the grievous infirmity with which he was stricken. When any measures of peculiar severity were to be propounded, he was always chosen by the Committee to bring them forward, and he was remarkable for uttering the most atrocious and pitiless sentiments in a tone and with a manner the most affectionate and tender. Like most of his colleagues, he practised on great occasions some of those strokes for stage effect that

so powerfully affect the minds of the multitude, and of the French more than perhaps any other, being confounded with the sublime, and bordering generally upon the ludicrous. When the destruction of Lyons had been decreed, he had himself carried to the great place, and gave the signal for the work of demolition with a hammer, and the command or sentence in these words, "Je te condamne à être démolie au nom de la loi" (I condemn thee to destruction in the name of the law).

The nature of the debates in the Convention has been already adverted to. They were constantly interrupted by the utmost violence of individuals and parties, so as to set at nought all attempts of the President to keep any semblance of order. The scene was often one of perfect confusion, in which his bell tolled in vain, and his hat was in vain put on, and he occasionally left the chair in despair of maintaining even the outward appearance of order. The two cardinal points upon which hinge the whole regularity and independence of the proceedings in our popular assembly were wholly wanting in the French Convention—the chair was not supported and deferred to by common consent as representing the majority of the whole body, and the strangers admitted to the galleries (*tribunes*) were not there upon mere sufferance, ready to be instantly excluded if they

in the least particular presumed to interfere with the proceedings.

The licence and the personalities in which the members were wont to indulge with levity and coarse humour formed a strange and even appalling contrast to the dreadful work in which they were engaged.—Legendre was a butcher, and that he had imported the habits of his trade into his political sphere appears plainly enough from his proposition to have the King's body cut into eighty-three portions, and distributed among the several departments. His calling was not unfrequently brought up against him in the Convention —"Tais-toi, massacreur de bœufs!" said one whom he was denouncing. "C'est que j'en ai assommé qui avoient plus d'esprit que toi!" was the butcher's immediate reply.—Another being on his defence against a motion for a decree of accusation to put him on his trial, Legendre then presiding said, "Décrète qu'il soit mis"—"Décrète," said the other, interrupting him, "décrète que je suis bœuf, et tu m'assommeras toi-même."—Such passages remind one of the grotesque humours of the fiends in 'Paradise Lost,' whose scoffing raillery in their "gamesome mood" Milton has so admirably painted, to the extreme displeasure, no doubt, of his prudish critic, in whose estimation this is by "far the most exceptionable passage of the whole poem."*

* Addison, 'Spectator,' No. 279. The dialogue of mutual

The talent which Camille displayed as a writer has been alluded to; it might not appear to be of the highest order were we considering the merit of one who was a mere author. But he also played a great part among the actors in the scenes of the time; and of those he stands certainly highest as a master of composition. There is nothing vile or low in his taste, like that most base style of extravagant figure and indecent and even obscene allusion which disgusts us in the abominable writings of the Héberts and the Marats; nor are our feelings shocked by anything of the same ferocity which reigned through their constant appeals to the brutal passions of the savage mob. On the contrary, the allusions are chiefly classical, the sentiments generally humane, the diction refined. Seven papers only of his most celebrated work, '*Le Vieux Cordelier*,' appeared before his moderate counsels hurried him to the scaffold. But from one of these a passage may be selected for a fair sample of his powers as a writer. It is his appeal to the Convention, awakening their courage, and urging them to contemn the danger of stemming the ultra-revolutionary torrent; and it must be allowed that the topic of illustration is happily chosen, as it is certainly handled with ability:—

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sarcasm between Adamo and Sinon in Dante's 'Inferno,' would have given the same offence to the critic; and the poet seems as if conscious of the offence he was offering to squeamish persons when he makes Virgil chide his pupil for listening to such ribaldry.

"Eh quoi! lorsque tous les jours les douze cent mille soldats du peuple Français affrontent les redoutes hérissées de batteries les plus meurtrières, et volent de victoires en victoires, nous, députés à la Convention, nous, qui ne pouvons jamais tomber, comme le soldat, dans l'obscurité de la nuit, fusillé dans les ténèbres, et sans témoins de sa valeur; nous, dont la mort soufferte pour la liberté ne peut être que glorieuse, solennelle, et en présence de la nation entière, de l'Europe, et de la postérité, serions-nous plus lâches que nos soldats? Craindrons-nous de nous exposer, de regarder Bouchotte* en face? N'oserons-nous braver la grande colère du Père Duchesne,† pour remporter aussi la victoire que le peuple Français attend de nous, la victoire sur les ultra-révolutionnaires comme sur les contre-révolutionnaires; la victoire sur tous les intrigans, tous les fripons, tous les ambitieux tous les ennemis du bien public?"‡

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* A Terrorist general of the Hébert faction.

† The name of Hébert's infamous journal.

‡ "What! While the twelve hundred thousand soldiers of the French people each day face the redoubts bristling with the most destructive batteries, and fly from victory to victory, shall we—we, the representatives of that people in the Convention, we, who cannot fall, like soldiers, in the obscurity of night, killed in the dark, and with no witness of our valour—we, whose death for liberty cannot but be glorious, solemn, in the presence of the whole nation, of Europe, and of posterity—shall *we* be more timid than our troops? Shall we be afraid of exposing ourselves, of

St. Just was in every point of view a person very inferior to either Danton or Camille. Except his unhesitating audacity, derived from a strong enthusiasm, which nothing could quell, and which stopped at nothing, and a considerable facility of speech, but with no power of argument or gift of eloquence, he really appears to have possessed no quality to entitle him to the high place after which he aspired, and which he almost immediately gained at a very early age, for he was only twenty-one years old when the Revolution broke out, and barely twenty-five when he became a member of the Committee of Public Safety. He was a young man of a fine aspect, and even engaging countenance; and his sincere republican fanaticism was unquestionable. But this affords so little palliation of his conduct, that it rather makes him appear as so much the more dangerous, and it undoubtedly made him the more mischievous. His youth and spirit, always when combined a favourite with the multitude, gave him a sway which made Robespierre at once perceive the importance of attaching him to himself. He succeeded, for St. Just kept steadily by his patron to the end, and shared

facing Bouchotte? Shall we not dare to brave the fury of Père Duchesne, in order to win the victory which the people of France is expecting at our hands; a victory over ultra-revolutionists as well as counter-revolutionists, a victory over all the intriguers, all the knaves, all the ambitious, all the enemies of the country?"

the fate which his violent counsels, far outstripping those of his leader, would, if followed, possibly have postponed, if not prevented.

It must be added that with his fanaticism was mixed up the most selfish vanity and irritable impatience of whatever wounded it. The cold-blooded murder of Camille for a jest uttered at his expense, is one of the most disgusting atrocities in the whole Reign of Terror, and could only have been perpetrated by a man whose whole feelings were absorbed in self-esteem, and to whom carnage was familiar or indifferent, if not absolutely grateful. He had shown the same proneness to shed blood when employed as the Committee's emissary and representative with the armies. He is said to have caused fifty officers to be shot in one day, when he was with the Army of the North; and when the siege of Charleroi went on less rapidly than his impatience and ignorant presumption desired, he put a colonel of artillery to death without remorse.

He valued himself, among other accomplishments, on his talent for composition; but his writings, like his speeches, were a wretched patchwork of phrases from Rousseau, Diderot, and other writers of the modern school, strung together with sounding generalities about equality, the people, and the rights of man. To give samples of the rant, half-cold declamation, half-mawkish senti-

mentality, which composed his speeches would be unprofitable. Like all such authors, he mistook exclamation and apostrophe for pathos. This passage on the King's trial is far from being an unfair specimen of his manner; and nothing can be much worse. After alluding to Louis XVI.'s known kindness of disposition and his charities, he breaks out into this rhapsody :—

"Louis outrageait la vertu ; à qui paraîtra-t-elle désormais innocente? Ainsi donc, âmes sensibles, si vous aimez le peuple, si vous vous attendrissez sur son sort, on vous évitera avec horreur; la fausseté d'un roi qui travestissait le sentiment ne permettrait plus de vous croire ; on rougira de paraître sensible."*

Hardly any of the revolutionary chiefs showed less shining talents than St. Just; none proved themselves more unscrupulous in the pursuit of victory; none more careless of the crimes they instigated or perpetrated. His maxim that "no one can rule in France innocently" (on ne règne pas innocemment en France), if followed up to its practical consequences, was the direct sanction

* "Louis outraged virtue: to whom will she hereafter appear innocent? Thus, ye feeling hearts, if you love the people, if you are melted at seeing their lot, you will be shunned with horror; the falsehood of a king who masked himself in sentiment will not suffer you to gain credit for your professions. Men will henceforth blush to appear tender-hearted."

of every enormity that ambition could commit in chace of dominion.

It should seem as if, in casting their several parts, the Decemvirs of the Committee well understood each other's propensities, if not their several capacities. While the war-department was committed to Carnôt, who by common consent was the most singularly fitted to conduct it, others might be less qualified for their departments than Carnôt was for his, but all were apparently chosen with a view at least to their several tastes, if not to their genius. The care of the police and of whatever measures were required for maintaining or exciting the popular feelings, was given to Robespierre; the proposal of violent proceedings to the mild-spoken and, from his infirmities, inoffensive Couthon; while the reports to the Convention fell upon Barrère, whose want of determined or distinct principles and character, as well as his easy eloquence, seemed peculiarly to fit him for this task; and to the suspicious, implacable St. Just belonged the watching and denunciation of political offenders, including of course the extensive system of spy-craft (*espionnage*) kept in perpetual activity. It should seem, however, as if Robespierre himself employed spies apart from his colleagues. Curious reports of these agents were found among his papers, and have been made public. The circumstances seized upon by the watchful eyes of those vile wretches

are all of the most trivial nature, and demonstrate the readiness with which everything and anything becomes matter of charge under such a regimen. Of one deputy (Bourdon de l'Oise) it is said, after tracing his whole motions during the day, that on going to the Convention he yawned repeatedly while reports were read of matters advantageous to the state. (*Papiers Inédits*, vol. i. p. 370.) Of another (Thuriot) it is told, that some one upon quitting him said, "Ne tarde pas" (make haste). (*Ib.* p. 371.) Of Legendre it is said, after a minute account of all the insignificant things he did during the morning, that he "conversed mysteriously with some one, and that both appeared to avoid the crowd." (*Ib.* p. 367.)

It is not to be forgotten, in considering the relative demerits of the Triumvirate, that by far the most sanguinary period of the Reign of Terror was the last month of its duration, as we have already seen; and during the whole of that period Robespierre absented himself from the Committee as well as the Convention. It is true that he was engaged in supporting possibly the system, certainly his own party in it, at the Jacobin Club, and with the municipality of Paris; and he most probably was aware of all that passed among his colleagues in his absence. But the details at least of these wholesale murders, the *fournées* (or batches), as they were quaintly termed, were left to the un-

flinching hands of the pitiless Couthon and the ferocious St. Just. Nor is it to be kept out of view that this detestable youth urged upon the tyrant a measure from which even his savage nature recoiled (if indeed it be not that his nerves gave way at the prospect), a measure of sweeping extermination, which would have left all former atrocities excluded from their due share of execration with aftertimes, and must have stayed, possibly might have averted, the fate of the Dictators.

The reflection which after all most constantly arises in the mind from the contemplation of such dreadful scenes, is the one to which reference has in part already been made towards the commencement of these details—an astonishment almost amounting to incredulity that the French nation could have stood by, and seen and suffered them to be enacted. Everything was done which human wickedness could accomplish to outrage the strongest feelings of our nature, and those feelings of every description; for while the most atrocious, the most shameless injustice, proverbially said to drive wise men mad, was displayed with an audacity that would hardly be becoming in those whose judgment was infallible and nature impeccable, and while the highest dignities, the most

exalted institutions were laid prostrate at the feet of the vulgar tyrants of a day, such deeds of blood were perpetrated as always take the strongest hold upon the feelings of the bulk of mankind; and all this was not merely submitted to in patience; a considerable portion of the people in many places were active approvers, and many were agents, and were stained with these dreadful crimes. If any one had, before 1789, aye, or even before 1792, foretold that the French people would submit to a law preventing men upon trial for their lives from being heard in their own defence, and commanding that the judges should condemn to death for political offences without evidence, he would have been laughed to scorn as a false prophet, and reprobated as a public slanderer. But if any one had pretended to foresee the time when the statue of a miscreant universally scorned and detested for daily recommending the wholesale murder of his fellow-creatures, without a vestige of those talents which too often conceal the nakedness of guilt, or those graces which lend a passing hue of fairness to the external surface of moral poison, would, with general applause, even of those who had loathed him living, be enshrined in the national temple of glory, among men whose genius and virtue had long been the pride of the French people—assuredly such a seer would have been deemed insane. Can anything more strikingly or

more frightfully impress upon the mind a sense of the mischiefs which may spring from popular enthusiasm, when bad men obtain sway over a nation little informed, and unable or unwilling to think and judge for itself; ready to believe whatever it is told by interested informants, to follow whatever is recommended by false advisers acting for their own selfish ends? That no such scenes could now be renewed in France we may very safely venture to affirm, though much mischief might still be wrought by undue popular excitement. That in this country such things are wholly impossible needs no proof; the very least of the terrible departures from justice which marked the course of the French mob-tyranny, would at once overthrow whatever person might here attempt to reign by such means, and would probably drive us into some extremes diametrically opposite to those which had given birth to any outrage of the kind. But this security arises wholly from the people's habit of thinking for themselves, and the impossibility of any one making them act upon grounds which they do not comprehend, or for purposes in which they have no manifest interest, or to suit views carefully concealed from them, and only covered over with vague phrases, which in this country are always the source of incurable distrust.

It is impossible to say the same thing of all

parts of our people; it would be most false to assert, for example, that the Irish are safe from such influence. On the contrary, they manifestly do not think and judge for themselves; they certainly are in the hands of persons who need not take the trouble to give sound reasons, or any reasons at all, for their advice. The Irish people are excited and moved to action in the mass by appeals to matters of which they do not take the pains to comprehend even the outline, much less to reflect on the import and tendency. They are made, and easily made, to exert themselves for things of which they have formed no distinct idea, and in which they have no real interest whatever. They leave to others, their spiritual and their political guides, the task of forming their opinions for them, if mere cry and clamour, mere running about and shouting, can be called opinions. They never are suspicious of a person's motives, merely because they see he has an interest in deceiving them. They never weigh the probabilities of the tale, nor the credit of him that tells it. They may be deceived by the same person nine times in succession, and they will believe him just as implicitly the tenth; nay, were he to confess that he had wilfully deceived them to suit a purpose of his own, they would only consider this a proof of his honesty, and lend an ear if possible more readily to his next imposture. A people thus uninstructed,

thus excited, thus guided, are most deeply to be pitied; and the duty is most imperative of their rulers, by all means, and without delay, to rescue them from such ignorance, and save them from such guides by every kindly mode of treatment which a paternal Government can devise. But such a people, especially if the natural goodness of their dispositions were not outraged by scenes of a cruel kind, would easily be moved to witness and to suffer the grossest violations of justice, would let themselves be hallooed on to the attack of their best friends by any wily impostor that might have gained their confidence, and would suffer men as base and as execrable as Marat to usurp the honours of their Pantheon.

But it must be admitted that there existed two powerful causes of the success which attended the vile agitators of France,—causes sufficient to account for much of the impression which they were allowed to make, and of the impunity which they enjoyed after their worst misdeeds.

In the *first* place there was a very large portion of genuine and even virtuous patriotism among many of the men who bore a part in public affairs, who remained attached to their principles during the struggle of parties, and who were but little corrupted by the personal views which had early seduced so many of their chiefs. They had a strong feeling in favour of liberty, and of con-

sequent attachment to the Revolution in the first and guiltless stage of its existence; they had also an ardent love of their country, of her glory, above all, of her independence. The court-party early betrayed views, natural in their position, hostile to the new order of things; and as the revolutionary measures more departed from moderation, and the existence of the monarchy became more exposed to peril, that party cast their eyes unhappily towards foreign assistance, the idea which at once aroused the feelings of Frenchmen, and marshalled on the side of even an extreme policy, a large portion of the community not originally prepared to part with all the existing institutions of that ancient kingdom. Nothing but the invasion of the allies in 1792 could have reconciled such men to the violence which was then done, not only to the court and royal family, but also to multitudes of harmless individuals in obscure station. The brilliant progress of the war during the Reign of Terror blinded many persons to the atrocities daily committed; and their perpetrators had the skill to make it supposed that a sudden reverse of the singular fortune which attended their arms, if not an invasion of France by the allies, was the alternative to be expected from the overthrow of their dominion and a restoration of moderate and regular government. In the midst of all the factious conflicts which tore the infant

Republic, the general prevalence of purely patriotic feelings and of motives solely influenced by honest views of the public good, how often soever mistaken, remains quite unquestionable. The great bulk of the Convention, and many even of the leaders, were men devoted to their country, and bent only on the discharge of their public duty. "*La patrie*," the magic word which never lost its influence, was in all men's mouths, but also in most men's hearts. Many chiefs who became corrupted by ambition in the course of their exertions for her interests, or perverted by hostility towards each other in the progress of their mutual conflicts, began their career with as unfeigned a love of their country, and as honest an attachment to revolutionary principles, and the cause of just reform, as ever filled the hearts or guided the course of any statesmen in any age. Some of the great leaders, as Robert Lindet, Vergniaud, perhaps Danton and Camille, retained the same principles throughout their short and stormy lives. Some, as Carnôt, Lakanal, Barthélemy, probably Rœderer, after holding fast by their integrity during the awful struggle that was so fitted to try men's souls, survived the tempest, and adorned by their talents and edified by their virtues the more tranquil season that succeeded. The criminal portion of the revolutionists were few in number compared to those whom they duped by their arts, or whom they succeeded in

overawing by the violence of the multitude. But it was not wholly against their will, or through the mere influence of terror, that the bulk of the Convention and of the country submitted to the outrages of the Decemvirs. An alarm of an opposite nature worked strongly on their minds; the dread of a Counter-revolution, and of the vengeance which its leaders, if successful, would surely exercise, had a very powerful operation in reconciling men's minds to the existing Government; and it is certain that the execution of the King and the other crimes early committed by some and connived at by all, had the greatest influence in causing a general fear of retribution and a proportional alarm at what must happen, should the old dynasty be restored.

These considerations must be taken into our account in examining the conduct of the French, and accounting for their submission to the tyranny, injustice, and cruelty of their revolutionary chiefs; else we shall both mistake the state of the question and do injustice to that great people. It is also due to the leading men of those times that we record how pure was the attachment of many of them to their country, and how little other motives operated on their minds. The course so frequent in such times, leading others from patriotism to faction, from zeal for a principle to impatience of opposition, and from desire of victory over an adversary to the lust of power for personal grati-

fication, gave rise to most of the errors and many of the crimes which we have been contemplating. A melancholy consideration of these and their causes only serves to enhance the value of those men who yielded to no such seductions, and to increase our respect for their pure motives and virtuous lives. But the same contemplation suggests another reflection, teaches another lesson. It shows, with the force of demonstration, the fatal consequences to themselves and their own virtue, of men, however strong their principles and pure their enthusiasm, yielding to such a passion, and overleaping under its influence the plain line of duty which forbids the doing of evil that good may come. It shows the fatal consequences to the community of suffering parties and their chiefs to acquire the ascendant, when pretending, perhaps at first really meaning, to rule the state for the furtherance of a wholesome, rational policy—it being hard to say whether more wickedness may be committed by public men under the influence of enthusiasm, or more detriment sustained by the country under the misguidance of faction.

In the *second* place it must be observed that in all times of revolutionary violence there is an impunity secured to the worst characters by the spirit of party, and especially by the slowness of party chiefs to sacrifice even their worst adherents, and give them over to the merited indignation of the

world. See the universal horror and disgust which Marat inspired in all men and of all parties—his odious violence, his virulence of temper more hateful still, his savage ferocity of manner exacerbated by the fury of his sentiments, and the wildness of his propositions; his avowed authorship of a journal which openly preached the indiscriminate massacre of whole classes for their political principles; his constant efforts to excite the mob and drive them towards the most infernal excesses*—all

* In recommending the massacre of all aristocrats, he scrupled not to proclaim through his paper, the '*Ami du Peuple*,' that 270,000 heads must fall by the guillotine; and he published lists of persons whom he consigned to popular vengeance and destruction by their names, description, and places of residence. He was remarkable for the hideous features of a countenance at once horrible and ridiculous, and for the figure of a dwarf, not above five feet high. He was on his first appearance in the mob-meetings of his district the constant butt of the company, and maltreated by all, even to gross personal rudeness. The mob, however, always took his part, because of the violence of his horrid language. Thus, long before he preached wholesale massacre in his journal, he had denounced 800 deputies as fit for execution, and demanded that they should be hanged on as many trees. His constant topic was assassination, not only in his journal, but in private society. Barbaroux describes him in his 'Mémoires' (p. 59) as recommending that all aristocrats should be obliged to wear a badge, in order that they might be recognised and killed. "But," he used to add, "you have only to wait at the playhouse door and mark those who come out, and to observe who have servants, carriages, and silk clothes; and if you kill them all, you are pretty sure you have

these execrable and utterly abominable things had so entirely obliterated the merits which his revolutionary violence and devotion to the extreme party might seem to display, that no one would associate with him or remain on the bench of the assembly on which he took his seat; and when he rose to vindicate himself from the charges on which he was put upon his trial, and began by saying that he was aware he had many enemies in the Convention, his voice was drowned by cries from every quarter of "*All! All!*"—Yet the Jacobin party allowed this wretch to be elected one of the deputies from the capital;* and neither Robespierre nor any of

killed so many aristocrats. Or if ten in a hundred should be patriots, it don't signify—you have killed ninety aristocrats." He was about fifty at the time of his death, being born in 1744, and consequently of an age prior to that of the other leaders except Bailly, who was born in 1736. He is said to have taught French in Edinburgh about the year 1774; and he there published a pamphlet in English under the title of '*The Chains of Slavery.*' He was born at Neufchâtel, and was an obscure medical practitioner in Paris. He published some works of some learning and little other merit on subjects of physical science.

* There were among the twenty-four deputies of Paris in the Convention ten of the greatest leaders, exclusive of Marat,—Robespierre and his brother, Danton, Collot d'Herbois, Camille Desmoulins, Legendre, Fabre d'Eglantine, Billaud Varennes, David, and Egalité (*ci-devant* Duc d'Orléans). Robespierre's brother was a person of no weight, and only known from his relationship. He was, however, a zealous republican, was employed with the army of Italy

his adherents, nor even Danton, ventured to denounce him, and to give their real and known sentiments respecting him—nay, when the accident of his assassination had freed the earth from so monstrous a pollution, and his bust was simply for that reason placed in the Pantheon, most of the great leaders paid tributes of respect from time to time to his memory, holding up his supposed services as objects of public gratitude, and his death as a martyrdom for revolutionary principles. Yet that death had not obliterated the recollection of any one of the enormities of his life, which had made him so justly the object of universal scorn. Robespierre pronounced his funeral oration; David boasted of preserving by his pencil "the cherished features of the virtuous friend of the people;" and Danton most unaccountably and preposterously called him the Divine Marat, boasting after his assassination of having long before given him that very absurd appellation.

Can any one doubt that such conduct in parties and their chiefs, such a pusillanimous truckling to the passions of the rabble, such a base pandering to their worst propensities as this silence respecting great criminals implies, must ever be as impolitic as it is profligate and unprincipled? We have

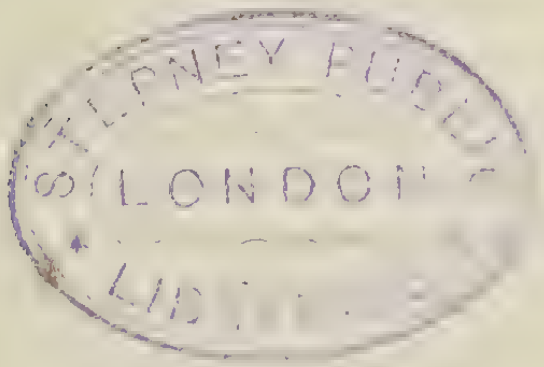
when it took Nice; and he sacrificed himself generously on the downfall of his brother, with whom he was arrested at his own desire, and executed with the Triumvirate.

examples of its consequences in all ages, and it has proved most injurious to many a great man's renown. It was probably only as a party leader that Julius Cæsar, without partaking in Catiline's conspiracy, spoke far too gently of it, and gave its accomplices his protection, if not his countenance, on the proceeding against them before the senate. But the result of this party delicacy has been the impression which still rests on the memory of that great man, and leads to a prevailing suspicion of his having secretly joined the most abandoned of conspirators. So, in modern times, whoever is afraid of reprobating and attacking known guilt merely for fear of losing the support of some partisan, or offending some party, must make up his mind to passing for the accomplice in crimes which, whether from timidity or upon calculation, he dares not denounce. Against the loss of support let men wisely set the loss of character, which such an unprincipled course is sure to entail upon those who pursue it; and it is not doubtful on which side the balance of the account will be found to rest.

One other reflection of a practical nature is important enough to be here added, as the natural result of the survey which we have been taking of the Reign of Terror—I mean the extreme danger of allowing political bodies, under any pretext

whatever, to interfere with the administration of justice. The Convention's controversy with the Revolutionary Tribunal was in truth the cause of all the horrors which we have been contemplating. The thin disguise under which this interference was veiled could deceive no one, least of all those who made use of it to hide their tyranny. "The public good"—"the danger of the country"—"the safety of the people"—above all, "the privileges of the Legislative Body" and "the sacred rights of the people's representatives"—were constantly in men's mouths as a justification for the Convention assuming the judicial power, and subjugating the courts of justice. When we see our own Houses of Parliament setting up their claim to punish summarily all who dispute, even in courts of law, and according to the course which the law prescribes, those powers declared in no written statute, and only asserted or defined from time to time as their exercise is found convenient, and always after the act is done which they are put forth to condemn and to visit—surely we may well feel some alarm at such a stride towards the very worst of the outrages on all justice and all humanity that form the chief disgrace of the French Revolution. To take an example:—The House of Commons prints and sells libels upon individuals; and if the injured party dare, without leave, to sue the printers or the authors whose slanders the Commons have thought

fit to publish, he is sent to prison for breach of privilege. But if the injured party petitions humbly for leave to proceed in vindicating his wounded honour, he meets with a flat refusal. It is the pleasure of the Commons to deal in slander, and to this he must submit. Nay, it was quite clear that a late government, being unable to give their mob supporters strong measures of innovation, attacked the Judges instead—knowing this to be, in the mob's eyes, an acceptable equivalent.



SIEYES.

THERE are few names in the French Revolution which have figured so much as that of the Abbé Siéyes; and hardly any which is better known in connexion with this great chapter of modern story. Those who have only marked the space which he filled in debate, or the merits of his celebrated tracts at the convocation of the States General, or the failure of all his plans of constitutions, are apt to underrate the importance of his labours, and to suppose that his high place in the revolutionary Pantheon had been inconsiderately awarded by the public voice. A personal acquaintance with him would certainly have led to the same conclusion. But near observers, belonging to the times in which he figured, entirely dissent from this opinion, and give reasons, apparently satisfactory, for taking the more ordinary view of his services and his importance. I have frequently discussed the subject both with General Carnôt and Prince Talleyrand, neither of them at all likely to be deceived by a mere theorist, both of them entertaining very little respect for a metaphysical politician, and

from all their own tastes and habits sure to regard with somewhat of disdain a purely speculative statesman. Yet both agreed in affirming the great merit of the Abbé, and they appealed to the extreme importance of the measures which proceeded from him, and for the suggestion of which they both gave him the exclusive credit.

Those great measures were three in number, of which certainly it would not be easy to overrate the importance,—namely, the joint verification of the powers at the meeting of the States General, the formation of the National Guards, the establishment of the new system of provincial division and administration. The first of these measures led directly to the important step of the three orders, Prelates, Peers, and Commons, sitting in one chamber, and the consequent absorption of the whole in the latter body. The value of the second needs not be dwelt upon. But the third was by far the most material of the whole, because it not only settled the Revolution upon an immoveable foundation—the admission of the people everywhere to a share in the local administration of their concerns—but destroyed the remains of the monarchical divisions of the territory, and rendered inevitable that grand step, the most precious of all the fruits of the Revolution, the abolition of the various local and customary codes, and the extension over the whole country of one universal system of juris-

prudence; in the stead of a state of things so intolerable, and so absurd, as the existence of totally different laws in different streets of the same town or hamlet.

If it is granted that the whole praise of these reforms belongs undivided to Siéyes, it is proved that his was a mind most fertile of resources, and that its conceptions were not more vast than they were practical. M. Thiers describes his genius as characterised by this peculiarity—"a systematic concatenation of his own ideas"—a peculiarity which he shared with our Bentham; and the likeness is only made the more striking when the author adds, that "to this was united an inflexible obstinacy of disposition, which made him as tenacious of his own opinions as he was intolerant of all others." (*Hist. de la Révol. Française*, tom. i.) M. Mignet describes him as still more of a speculatist; but his sketch loses not at all the resemblance to what we have seen of Bentham. "Siéyes," says he, "would have founded a sect in the days of monkish solitude; and study had early ripened his faculties, and filled his mind with new, strong, and extensive ideas, but somewhat systematic. Society had been the main subject of his investigations. He had followed its progress, and decomposed its springs, and he conceived the nature of government to be rather a question of age and period than of rights; he disdained the ideas of others, because

he found them incomplete: and, in his eyes, half a truth was equivalent to error. Opposition irritated him; he was not communicative; he desired to be understood entirely, and this he found impossible with half the world. His disciples transmitted his systems to others, and this gave them a mysterious air, and made him the object of a kind of worship. He possessed the authority which attends a perfect political science, and the constitution might have sprung from his head, like Minerva from Jupiter's or the codes of ancient lawgivers, if it had not been that in our days every one claimed a right of aiding him, or of modifying his work. Nevertheless, his forms were, with some modifications, for the most part adopted; and in the Committees, where his labours lay, he had more disciples than fellow-workmen." (*Hist. de la Révol. Française*, tom. i. p. 113.)

As of other remarkable persons, so of Siéyes are there many things recounted which appear to rest on no foundation. Of this description is the story so often told, that on the question coming to him upon the punishment which should be inflicted on the unfortunate Louis XVI., he, impatient of the speeches which had preceded him, pronounced these words, "*La mort, sans phrase.*" No such thing is recorded in the account published by authority in the 'Monitcur.' Under the head of Deputies from the Department of La Sarthe, we have this entry:—

"Froyer—La Mort.

"Siéyes—La Mort.

"Le Tourneur*—La Mort"

It is a form of voting adopted by many of the members, and nothing whatever distinguishes these from the other votes.

To the earlier period of the Revolution, the importance and the fame of Siéyes must be confined. Nothing can well exceed the absurdity of some plans which he, at a later stage, propounded. He had a great share in the proceedings of Brumaire, which overthrew the Directory and founded the Consulship under Napoleon. But he desired not to establish a Consulate, of which he should himself hold his share, a divided and nominal third of the supreme power, while in reality all authority was to be vested in one of his colleagues. He proposed a form of government, which, for its absurdity, may fairly challenge the pre-eminence with any not the produce of Dean Swift's satirical humour. Napoleon should, according to this strange scheme, have been invested with the supreme magistracy, but without any power, executive or legislative; enriched with an enormous salary, and suffered to exercise the whole patronage, civil and military, of the State, while others were named by the people to make the laws, and conduct, in union with his executive nominees, the

* Le Tourneur de la Manche; afterwards one of the Executive Directory.

government of the country. Napoleon's remark was, that he had no wish to "be a fattened hog, on a salary of some millions (*cochon à l'engrais à une salaire de quelques millions*), after the life which he had led and in the position to which it had carried him." I must add that I have met with several French politicians, neither ignorant nor speculative, who had, much to my surprise, formed a favourable opinion of this plan.*

In the beginning of the year 1817, I made acquaintance with the Abbé, at that time, with Cambacérès and other regicides, residing at Brussels. I was then on my way to attend my parliamentary duties at the opening of the Session; and finding himself in company with a party leader, he was—unfortunately for me, who desired to hear him descant on matters which he understood—led to give me, at great length and with little fruit, his ideas upon a point the most incomprehensible to a foreigner, and indeed the most difficult for any uninitiated Englishman, any Englishman out of the vortex of practical politics, to understand,—namely, the course most fitting, in the circumstances of the moment, for the English Parliamentary opposition to take. I admired the unhesitating confidence with which he delivered authoritatively his opinions, oracularly dictating to me his crude, absurd, most ignorant notions.

* M. Thiers in his "*Consulat*" takes this view.

I marvelled at the boldness of the man who could thus lecture one necessarily well acquainted with the subject, of which the lecturer could not by possibility understand the A, B, C. I exceedingly lamented the loss of what might have been interviews productive of curious information. I returned to England without the least disposition to put a single one of his absurdities to the test of experience; for indeed to have mentioned even the most tolerable of them to the least experienced of my party would have been to raise a doubt of my seriousness, if not of my sanity. Both my valued friend the late Lord Kinnaird and myself were mightily struck with the contrast which Cambacérès presented to the Abbé in these interviews.

After the Revolution of 1830 Siéyes returned to Paris, where he lived to an extreme old age; and for several years before his death paid no attention to anything except the care of his health, seldom seeing his friends, and only quitting his house to take an airing in a carriage. A general desire was expressed by his colleagues of the Institute, that he should return to his place in that illustrious body. Count Rœderer was one of a deputation which sought an interview with him in the hopes of prevailing upon him to change his resolution and yield to the general wish. The attempt was vain: and a touching scene was described to me by the Count. After saying how

useless a member he should now be of any association, and conversing, but in a strain that bore marks of the hand of age being upon him, he said, "Enfin, je ne sais plus parler, ni"—and after a pause he added, "ni—me taire."

FOUCHÉ, (AFTERWARDS) DUKE OF OTRANTO.

[FOR THIS NOTE I AM INDEBTED TO MY NOBLE AND LEARNED FRIEND THE EARL STANHOPE.]

I FORMED his acquaintance at Dresden, where he arrived about November, 1815, as French Minister, but in a sort of honourable exile; and he told me that the Duke of Wellington had advised him not to accept that mission, saying, "You will get into a hole which you will never be able to leave." He afterwards expressed to me his regret at not having followed that advice, and his opinion that the anticipation was realized by the event.

From an exaggerated opinion, both of his own importance and of the malice of his enemies, he had left Paris in disguise, and was so apprehensive of being recognized, that when he met his wife on the road he would not acknowledge her. He had remained some weeks at Brussels, and carried on a correspondence with the Duke of Wellington and others, but, after receiving from the French Government a peremptory order to repair to his post, he continued his journey under the name of M. Durand, marchand de vin, till he came to Leipzig, where he resumed his own name. He was accompanied by his wife, who was of the family of Castellane, and related, as he said, to the Bourbons, with four children by his former marriage, by an eldest son who appeared to be of weak intellect, and who became remarkable for his avarice, by two other sons who, even in their

childhood, exhibited a strong disposition to cruelty, by a daughter, and by a very intriguing governess, Mdlle. Ribaud.

He had been early in life a professor in the Oratoire, and it was said very truly at Dresden that he had "le visage d'un moine, et la voix d'un mort," and, as he was for some time the only foreign minister at that court, that he appeared "like the ghost of the departed corps diplomatique." His countenance showed great intelligence, and did not indicate the cunning by which he was eminently distinguished; his manner was calm and dignified, and he had, either from nature or from long habit, much power of self-possession. When I announced to him the execution of Marshal Ney, of which by some accident I had received the earliest information, his countenance never changed. He appeared to be nearly sixty years of age, and his hair had become as white as snow, in consequence of his having, according to his own expression, "slept upon the guillotine for twenty-five years." His conversation was very animated and interesting, but it related chiefly to events in which he had been an actor, and his inordinate vanity induced him to say: "I am not a king, but I am more illustrious than any of them." His statements did not deserve implicit credence, and I may mention as an instance his bold denial that during the whole course of his long administration as Minister of Police, any letter had ever been opened at the post-office.

Amongst a great number of anecdotes which he related to me, there were two that exhibited in a very striking manner the fertility of his resources when he acted on his own theatre, though, as I shall afterwards show, he appeared utterly helpless amidst the difficulties which he encountered at Dresden.

While he was on a mission to the newly-established Cisalpine Republic, he received orders from the French

Directory to require the removal of some functionaries who were obnoxious to the Austrian Government. He refused to comply, and stated in his answer that those functionaries were attached to France; that the ill-will with which they were viewed by the Austrian Government was not a reason for the French Government to demand their dismissal; that, according to intelligence which had reached him, Austrian troops were advancing, and that the war would be renewed. The orders were reiterated without effect, and one morning he was informed that an agent of the Directory was arrived at his house, and was accompanied by some gens d'armes. Fouché desired that the agent might be admitted, and that a message might be sent to his friend General Joubert, who commanded some French troops then stationed in the same town, requesting him to come immediately, and to bring with him a troop of cavalry. The agent delivered to Fouché letters of recall, and showed to him afterwards an order to arrest him and to conduct him to Paris. Fouché made some observations to justify himself till the arrival of Joubert with the cavalry was announced, when he altered his tone, and told the agent: "You talk of arresting me, and it is in my power to arrest you." Joubert said, on entering the room, "Me voilà avec mes dragons, mon cher ami; que puis-je faire à votre service?" and Fouché replied: "Ce drôle-là veut m'arrêter." "Comment!" exclaimed Joubert, "dans ce cas-là je le taillerai en mille pièces." The agent excused himself as being obliged to execute the orders which he had received, and was dismissed by Fouché with the remark, "Vous êtes un sot; allez tranquillement à votre hôtel." When he had retired, Fouché observed that the Directory was not respected either at home or abroad, that it would therefore be easy to overthrow the government, and that Joubert might obtain high office if he would assist in the undertaking. Joubert answered that he was merely a soldier, and that he did not

wish to meddle in politics; but he granted Fouché's request of furnishing him with a military escort to provide for his safety till he reached Paris. On the road he prepared an address to the Council of Five Hundred, which was calculated to be very injurious, and perhaps fatal, to the government. When he arrived at Paris he called on each of the Directors, but was not admitted, and he expressed to me his conviction that he should have been arrested the next morning if he had not immediately insisted upon having an audience with Talleyrand, then Minister for Foreign Affairs. Fouché, after defending his conduct, said that he considered it his duty, before he presented his address, to show it to Talleyrand, who no sooner read it than he saw its dangerous tendency, and the whole extent of the mischief to which it might lead. He told Fouché: "I perceive that there has been a misunderstanding, but everything may be arranged:" and added, "the post of Minister to the Batavian Republic is now vacant, and perhaps you would be willing to accept it." Fouché, who perceived that the other was intimidated, determined to avail himself of the advantage which he had acquired, and replied that his honour and character had been attacked, that immediate reparation was necessary, and that his credentials must be prepared in the course of the night, in order that he might the next day depart on his mission. This request having been granted, Fouché proceeded to state that his journey to Paris had been very expensive; that he had, through his abrupt departure from the Cisalpine Republic, lost several valuable presents which he would have received; and that his new mission required another outlay, for all of which he demanded an order for the immediate payment of two hundred thousand francs by the national treasury. Talleyrand gave the order without hesitation; and Fouché, who had arrived in disgrace, if not in great danger, departed the next morning as a minister plenipotentiary with a considerable sum of money.

After Napoleon, on his return from Elba, had made such progress as alarmed the French Government, Monsieur, afterwards Charles X., sent a message to Fouché requesting a meeting with him in the Tuileries. Fouché declined it, saying that as the circumstance would be known, it would place his conduct in a very ambiguous light, and he then received another message proposing to meet him at the house of a third party. To this proposal Fouché assented, on the condition that the interview should take place in the presence of witnesses, two of whom should attend on each side. On such an occasion any questions of etiquette must have appeared of very subordinate importance; the condition was accepted, and in the interview, which lasted several hours, and till long after midnight, Fouché was offered the appointment of Police, the title of Prince, and the decoration of the St. Esprit. Fouché replied that the advance of Napoleon was the natural and necessary consequence of the general discontent which prevailed; that no human power could prevent his arrival at Paris; that Fouché's acceptance of office under such circumstances might create an impression of his having betrayed a sovereign whom he ought faithfully to serve; and that he was therefore obliged to reject the offers which in the course of the conversation were repeatedly pressed on his acceptance. It seemed to be supposed by the French Government that the refusal of such offers was an indication of attachment to Napoleon, and the next morning, when Fouché was in his carriage, at a short distance from his own house, he was stopped "in the name of the King," by an officer of police, attended by gens d'armes. Fouché desired them to accompany him to his house, when, on getting out of the carriage, he demanded the production of the warrant by which he was arrested; and on its being shown to him, he threw it on the ground, exclaiming, "It is a forgery; that is not the King's signature." The officer of police, astounded by the effrontery

with which Fouché spoke, allowed him to enter the house, when he made his escape through the garden, and went to the Princesse de Vaudremont, who concealed him till the return of Napoleon. Mdlle. Ribaud, the governess, sent a message to the National Guards requesting their immediate attendance, and conducted through the house the officer of police, as he told her that he had orders to take possession of Fouché's papers. His bureaus, &c. were searched, but nothing of any importance was found in them, and Mdlle. Ribaud when passing through her own room drew a trunk from beneath her bed, and, taking a key out of her pocket, offered to show her clothes to the officer of police, who said that he had no wish to give her that trouble. It was, however, in that trunk that Fouché's important papers were deposited. In the mean time the National Guards had arrived, and after they were harangued by Mdlle. Ribaud on the merits and services of Fouché, and on the insult and injustice with which he had been treated, they drove away the gens d'armes who attended the officer of police.

Fouché, who after the return of Napoleon was re-appointed Minister of Police, was asked by him whether it was not very desirable to obtain the services of Talleyrand, who was then one of the French ambassadors at Vienna. "Certainly," replied Fouché; and Napoleon then said, "What do you think of sending to him a handsome snuff-box?" Fouché, aware of the extreme absurdity of endeavouring to bribe a minister, who was supposed to be rapacious, by a present which, as a matter of course, he had received on the conclusion of every treaty, observed, if a snuff-box were sent to Talleyrand, he should open it to see what it contained. "What do you mean?" inquired Napoleon. "It is idle," replied Fouché, "to talk of sending to him a snuff-box. Let an order for two millions of francs be sent to him, and let one half of the sum be payable on his return to

France." "No," said Napoleon, "that is too expensive, and I shall not think of it."

When Napoleon determined to hold the Assembly of the *Champ de Mai*, he convened his Council of State, and read to them the speech which he intended to deliver on that occasion. Some of the members expressed their entire and unqualified approbation, and others suggested a few verbal alterations: but Fouché, when it came to his turn, said that he disapproved of it both in its form and in its substance, and he then strung together some of the commonplace phrases with which his ordinary conversation so much abounded, that "truth must be heard," that "illusions could no longer prevail," &c. One of the Councillors having remarked that a written document would be very desirable for the discussion, Fouché produced the speech which he had prepared. It stated that the Allied Powers had declared war not against France, but against Napoleon; that if they were sincere in their professions, they would guarantee to France her independence, and the free choice of her own government, and that he would in that case abdicate the throne; but that if such a guarantee were refused, it would be a proof that they were insincere, and that he would then ask permission to place himself at the head of the French armies in order to defend the honour of the country. Napoleon made no observation; but, calling the Councillors to him in succession, and whispering a few words to each of them, they rejected the proposal. He must have perceived that the Allies, who viewed with anxiety and mistrust the mighty conflict in which they were about to engage, would have granted the guarantee which was required; that he should have been obliged to abdicate; and that a Republic would have been established in which Fouche hoped and expected to acquire more power than he had yet possessed. Napoleon had on a former occasion removed Fouché from office, and reproached him with his insatiable

ambition, saying, "You might always have been minister, but you aspired to be more, and I will not suffer you to become a Cardinal Richelieu."

The Memoirs which after Fouché's death were published under his name do not appear to be authentic, and the statements contained in them differ in many respects from those which I received from him, but neither the one nor the other may have been founded in truth. He read to me occasionally some detached passages, which he composed without any reference to chronological order, but as the circumstances occurred to his mind, and according to his original plan, which he communicated to me in a letter. He intended to divide his narrative into the following parts:—

"La 1e explique la révolution qui a fait passer la France de l'antique monarchie à la république; la 2e celle qui a fait passer la France de la république à l'Empire de Bonaparte la 3e celle qui a fait passer la France de cet Empire à la Royauté des Bourbons; la 4e partie dira la situation de la France et de l'Europe."

In another letter he states:—

"Je travaille huit heures par jour à mon mémoire. Ceux qui croyent que ce sont les hommes qui font les révolutions seront étonnés de voir leur origine. J'ai déjà peint le premier tableau des événemens d'où sont sorties nos tempêtes passées. Le pendant de ce tableau sera un assez gros image d'où partira la foudre qui menace notre avenir."

His participation in the atrocities of the Revolution inspired horror at Dresden, where he formed very few acquaintances and received hardly any visits except from Count Salmur, a Piedmontois, who had known him at Paris, and from General Gaudi, who had been sent by the Prussian Government to negotiate with respect to the line of demarcation of the Saxon provinces which were ceded, and who had received instructions from Prince Hardenberg to see Fouché frequently, and to watch his proceedings. Fouché said to me

very often, "J'ai une folle envie d'écrire, et il faut que j'aille à la campagne;" and I knew that he was not disturbed by many visitors, but I observed to him that he might give directions not to admit them. He replied, "Ne voyez-vous pas que j'ai une jeune femme, et quand je me pousse en force, je la perds d'une autre manière?" I told him that he might very easily hire one of the country-houses which at that time of year were unoccupied; but he said that he should expect the owner to remain there during his residence, and to treat him with the respect and attention which were due to him. He seemed to think that even a stranger would be too happy to accept the proposal, and to have an opportunity of associating with a person who, according to his own opinion, was "more illustrious" than any king.

The confidential communications which he received from Paris were addressed to him under another name, and directed to the care of a pastrycook in that part of the town which lies on the other bank of the Elbe. He preserved his former habits of "espionnage," and remarked to me that a person who lived on the opposite side of the street sat close to the window, was much occupied in writing, was very regular in his habits, &c. He seemed to be amused in watching this unknown individual, who was afterwards discovered to be a spy sent by the French Government to observe Fouché.

His ignorance of geography, &c., was really ludicrous. When he heard that Napoleon was sent to St. Helena, he inquired on which side of the Cape it lay; and when he was told by an Englishman that he was going to Hamburgh to embark for England, he asked, "Are you not afraid at this time of year of making a voyage in the Baltic?" The other replied that he did not embark on the Baltic. "No," said Fouché, after some consideration, "you will go by the sea of Denmark."

He was extremely delighted when he was informed that

Lavalette had effected his escape by the good offices of Sir Robert Wilson and two other Englishmen, and after making a pompous eulogium on them, he said that although they had been punished by the French Government, they would everywhere be respected and honoured; that their conduct must excite general admiration, &c.; and after a long course of high-flown compliments, he concluded by an anticlimax, "if they should come here, I will even invite them to dinner."

According to a homely expression, "there was no love lost" between Fouché and Talleyrand. The former said, "Talleyrand est nul" till after he has drunk a bottle of Madeira: and the latter asked, "Do you not think that Fouché has very much the air of a country comedian?" Fouché spoke very contemptuously of the late Emperor of Austria, whom he called "un crétin."

I thought it indiscreet to ask any questions of Fouché on the cruelties of which he was represented to have been guilty at Lyons and at Nantes; but I took an opportunity of mentioning to him that a biographical memoir of him had appeared in the German language. It excited, as I expected that it would, his curiosity, and he requested me to translate it *vivâ voce*, which I accordingly did; and when the sanguinary scenes of Lyons were noticed he exclaimed, "I went there to save the inhabitants, all of whom would otherwise have been murdered by Collot d'Herbois. As for Nantes, I never was there." I remarked to him that the Memoir referred to letters which were signed both by him and by his colleague, and which had been published in the 'Moniteur;' but he replied that it would at that time have been dangerous to disavow them.

He had received from the Prince of the Asturias, afterwards Ferdinand VII., during his residence at Valençay, the most servile letters, earnestly entreating that Napoleon would confer upon him the high honour of allowing him to

be allied with some relation, however distant, of the Imperial Family. Fouché said that his hand was kissed by the Prince whenever he had occasion to see him; and added, "I washed it afterwards, for he was very dirty."

The intelligence which he received from Paris, through private as well as through public channels, and the hostility which was shown towards the regicides, of whom he was one, rendered him very apprehensive that his property would be confiscated, and he spoke to me frequently upon the subject. He observed that the Charter did not allow confiscation, but added, "ils ne se gênent pas;" and he proposed to make a nominal sale of his property to me, in order to place it beyond the grasp of the French Government. I objected to it on the ground that it would not be a *bonâ fide* transaction; but a day or two afterwards I received from him a note, expressing a wish to see me immediately. On going to him, he read to me some papers prepared in technical and legal phraseology, which stated that I had purchased his estates, the annual value of which was, I think, 7000*l.*, and also his house at Paris, with the furniture that it contained. I told him that I had already expressed my disapprobation of the principle on which the transaction would proceed; and I observed to him that the fraud would be discovered, for the French Government would upon inquiry learn from the English ambassador at Paris that I was only an eldest son with a very limited income, and that it was utterly impossible for me to make such purchases. He replied that I might be supposed to have given bonds, or other securities, which were satisfactory to him. I represented to him that the French ambassador in London might by a Bill in Chancery compel me to declare upon oath whether I had or had not purchased his property; and if so, with what funds? And he answered, "Ces parjures-là ne blessent point la conscience." I then said, "You have already informed me that one-half of your property is

settled on your children, and the easiest way of placing the whole of it in safety would be to settle the remainder on Madame la Duchesse." He exclaimed, "Parbleu, vous avez plus d'esprit que moi, et je ferai venir mon secrétaire sur-le-champ." An act in due form was instantly prepared, and, being registered in Dresden, became the subject of general conversation; but I considered his communications as confidential, and I said nothing as to the suggestion which I had offered, or as to my knowledge of the transaction.

He was also very apprehensive as to his personal safety, and said, "I fear that I may be carried off by some gens d'armes, and that no person will ever hear of me again." He then asked whether, in the event of his being arrested, he should not request General Gaudi to intercede for him with the prime minister, Count Einsiedel? I answered that they had no doubt much personal regard for each other, but that in their respective positions it could not be supposed that the former could have any influence with the latter. "Then," replied Fouché, "I will write to the King of Saxony, inquiring what course he will pursue if an order should arrive here for my arrest." He did so, though he was at that time French plenipotentiary: and he received from Count Einsiedel an answer, informing him that the King would under any circumstances act as became a man of honour.

On one occasion, when he was more than usually disquieted by the information which he had that morning received from Paris, he called on me, and after mentioning that he was in great danger, and that he wished to go into the Prussian dominions, he inquired if I would accompany him thither? I assented; and we went together to General Gaudi, who was not acquainted with the objects and motives of the intended journey, but seemed much astonished when Fouché abruptly said to him, "You once told me that you have an aunt who is settled in Silesia; and I should like to

go and live with her." General Gaudi replied that his aunt was old and infirm, and not accustomed to company, and that she would not like to see a stranger. Fouché then conversed with General Gaudi on the choice of a residence, and was with great difficulty dissuaded from going to one of the ceded provinces, the governor of which entertained for him the strongest aversion. After we had left General Gaudi, I asked Fouché when he intended to depart? and he answered, "At twelve o'clock to-night." I told him that it would have a better appearance if he went by daylight; and I added, "You should prepare a passport for yourself." "No," replied Fouché; "I intend to travel under your passport." "How so?" I inquired. "As your valet-de-chambre," answered Fouché. I then said that I was willing to accompany him in his quality of French minister, but that I would not convey him under a false character, or smuggle him through the country as if he were contraband goods. He was much displeased, and employed by turns flattery and abuse; but I remained inflexible; and, as I would not accompany him in the manner which he proposed, he determined to remain at Dresden.

At length there appeared in France a law, or edict, which allowed the regicides to reside, at their own choice, either in Austria, in Prussia, or in Russia; and the Austrian minister desired Fouché to determine which of them he would prefer. He wished to settle at Berlin, where, as he said, his advice would be very useful; but he found upon inquiry that this would not be permitted, and Breslau was proposed to him for a residence, which he did not approve, and he went into the Austrian dominions—first to Prague, where he lived very obscurely and with great economy—afterwards, and for a short time, to Linz on the Danube—and then to Trieste, where he died. His widow, who had a life-interest in half his property, re-married. His house at Paris was

sold to Baron Rothschild; and it was said, but I know not with what truth, that he bequeathed his manuscripts to Louis XVIII.

It is impossible to close the book that records the rapid, even sudden, rise to power of the men whose course we have been contemplating, without reflecting upon the vanity and emptiness of the gratification held out to ambition, or vanity, or love of glory, by revolutionary times. That gratification is generally much vaunted as the more precious fruit of civil disorder, and no feature of revolution offers more attractions to the young, the ardent, the daring, than its tendency to exalt merit, and its opening a short path to distinction and to power, which a spirit that spurns the long and laborious ascent under regular governments fondly takes, untired by the slipperiness of the road, and unscared by the precipices yawning on either side. All such spirits are impatient of the slow ascent to fame and influence to which all systems of policy confine the ambitious in ordinary times; and hence the delight with which they hail the subversion of ancient institutions, and the approach of wide-spreading change.

But to these men the portion of history which we have been examining reads an impressive lesson. No one endowed with even an ordinary share of prudence can be extravagant enough to prefer the

twelve months' possession of power which the Decemvirs obtained as the price of all their struggles, their perils, and their crimes, to the fortune which, slowly gained, would have been long and securely possessed under a regular government. No one setting before his eyes the chances of failure and of destruction which he must have to encounter, and the small probability of being numbered with the successful few, would even deem the prize of some months' dominion, followed by an ignominious death, worth contending for at those hazards, to say nothing of the certain cost of being charged with the heaviest load under which the conscience can labour. The life, certainly the reign, of a demagogue is of necessity a short one: even where religious bigotry and imposture combine with popular ignorance to give it an unnatural extension, it cannot in any civilized state last long. In France, where its despotism was the most uncontrolled, its duration was the shortest, its sufferings and its ignominy the most appalling.

It is thus that the fate of the revolutionary leaders, when duly weighed, is well fitted to teach men the wisdom for their own interest, even if virtue and duty were wholly disregarded, of preferring the sure though slow, the lasting though moderate, rewards which a settled order of things holds out to virtuous ambition or honest love of fame. Such a study may reconcile them, even the

most impatient of them, to the duty of bridling their passions, and submitting to the conditions on which alone power and glory may be innocently enjoyed.

"Certare ingenio, contendere nobilitate,
Nocteis atque dies niti præstante labore
Ad summas emergere opes, rerumque potiri."*

But these are not the only reflections which arise naturally in the mind upon a near contemplation of the scenes of the Revolution. We learn, when candidly examining the merits and the history of its great leaders, to distrust the general opinion of them which has prevailed, formed under the influence of the feelings naturally excited by the dreadful events of their day—events the horror of which almost inevitably tended to involve all that had any share of their guilt in an indiscriminate charge of sanguinary and profligate ambition. The public voice might be excused for thus pronouncing one undistinguishing sentence of condemnation upon them at the time, and while the sentiments that had been raised by so bloody a tragedy retained their force. But subsequent authors and reasoners have too frequently fallen into the same error, and treated the subject as superficially as the ephemeral writers and the speakers of the day. The common, almost the invariable, course has been to make no

* "Striving in genius, scaling still the heights
Of glory; toiling days and sleepless nights,
Among the wealthy the first place to gain,
And o'er a subjugated empire reign."

distinction whatever between the different actors in the drama. Danton has been treated with the same severity as Robespierre; Camille and St. Just have received one award of condemnation. Nay, the wretched Marat, whom it would be a profanation of the name to call a statesman, has not been held up to greater execration and scorn than those who really, more or less, were entitled to be so called. A more calm examination of their history, for which survey the time may be admitted now to have arrived, begets far more than doubts upon the soundness of the commonly received opinion, and teaches us to distribute in very different and very unequal shares our praise and our censure. Even respecting Robespierre himself, it is probable that the pitch of the public voice has been somewhat too high, and that his bad and despicable character, dark as undeniably it was, had still some few redeeming traits to distinguish it from the Collots and the Billauds, by far the worst of the whole.

Allowance, too, must be made for the exaggerated, the exalted state of political feeling that prevailed among party leaders, and even among their followers, very generally in those dismal times. There can be no more certain proof of this than the fact that even at the present day, when time might be supposed to have calmed all the fervour of the revolutionary crisis, and reflection to have opened men's eyes to the degree in

which they had been formerly misled, we find persons in France of unquestionably virtuous principles unable to bestow the just portion of censure upon the companions of their earlier years, and most reluctant to look back upon those scenes with a natural regret. I have been astonished to hear such persons characterise Collot d'Herbois as a well-meaning though misguided man (*bon homme, mauvaise tête*); and somewhat less struck, indeed, though still surprised, to find them hankering after the belief that whatever was done had been the fault of the Royalists and the Allies, while the all-atoning name of "patriot" covered the multitude of Decemviral sins, and the sole regard of every one who acted in those days was deemed to have been "*La Patrie.*"

It would be extremely wrong to suffer ourselves to be warped in our opinions by such prejudices, or to let them arrest the judgment required by the interests of truth and justice. Yet it would be equally contrary to both were we to exclude from our consideration the extenuating tendency of the undeniable fact, that all men in those times were more or less under the influence of the temporary delirium which the great change had produced; a delirium which rendered them alike insensible to their own sufferings, blind to their own perils, neglectful of their duties, and regardless of other men's rights.

But having discussed the moral, it remains to add the great political lesson which this important branch of history is so well fitted to teach—the incalculable value of firmness on the part of those intrusted with the powers of government, whether executive, legislative, or judicial. The whole of the French Revolution is one continued example of the powers of intimidation and the dangers of fear. All the successive passages, even the darkest, are cleared up and satisfactorily explained by this consideration. At first apprehension, contagiously spreading into alarm, next rising to terror—that is the pivot on which all turned—that the governing rule of all conduct—that the common principle to reconcile all contradictions, to satisfy all conditions, to reduce all anomalies within rule. A moderate portion of courage in the rulers would have sufficed, if early displayed, to make what soon proved the scourge of the tempest fill the vessel's sails like a favouring breeze—to restrain within safe bounds the force which might have been used as an ally, but soon grew to a remorseless and a pitiless tyrant :—

"Parva metû primo, mox sese attollit in auras,
Ingredituque solo et caput inter nubila condit."*

* The puny creature that can hardly scare
Our steps, swift rises hideous through the air,
Stalks o'er the earth resistlessly, and shrouds
Its horrid crest among the rolling clouds.

JOHN, FOURTH DUKE OF BEDFORD.

THE purpose of the following observations is to rescue the memory of an able, an amiable, and an honourable man, long engaged in the public service, both as a minister, a negotiator, and a viceroy,* long filling, like all his illustrious house, in every age of our history, an exalted place among the champions of our free constitution,—from the obloquy with which a licentious press loaded him when living; and it is in every way discreditable

* He was in 1744, when thirty-four years of age, First Lord of the Admiralty, in which capacity he brought forward Keppel, Howe, and Rodney. In 1748 he became Secretary of State, and continued in that office till 1751. In 1756 he went to Ireland as Lord Lieutenant, and remained there with extraordinary popularity till 1761, when he was made Lord Privy Seal. Next year he went as Ambassador to Paris, and after his return was made President of the Council. He retained this office till 1766. He was in 1768 chosen Chancellor of the University of Dublin; and died in 1771. All who have ever spoken of this excellent person, with the exception of Junius, have praised his frank and honest nature, wholly void of all dissimulation and all guile; and have borne a willing testimony to the soundness of his judgment, as well as his unshaken firmness of purpose.

to British justice that few if any attempts have, since his death, been made to counteract the effects of calumny, audaciously invented, and repeated till its work of defamation was done, and the falsehood of the hour became confounded with historical fact.

Beside the satisfaction of contributing to frustrate injustice, and deprive malice of its prey, there is this benefit to be derived from the inquiry upon which I am about to enter. We shall be enabled to test the claims of a noted slanderer to public confidence, and to ascertain how little he is worthy of credit in his assaults upon other reputations. But we shall also be enabled to estimate the value of the class to which he belongs, the body of unknown defamers who, lurking in concealment, bound by no tie of honour, influenced by no regard for public opinion, feeling no sense of shame, their motives wholly inscrutable, gratifying, it may be, some paltry personal spite, or actuated by some motive too sordid to be avowed by the most callous of human beings, vent their calumnies against men whose whole lives are before the world, who in vain would grapple with the nameless mob of their slanderers, but who, did they only know the hand from whence the blows are levelled, would very possibly require no other defence than at once to name their accuser. That the efforts of this despicable race have sometimes prevailed against

truth and justice; that the public, in order to indulge their appetite for abuse of eminent men, have suffered the oft-repeated lie to pass current without sifting its value, and have believed what was boldly asserted, with the hardly credible folly of mistaking for the courage of truth the cheap daring of concealed calumniators, cannot be doubted. The effects produced by the vituperation of Junius upon the reputation of the Duke of Bedford would at once refute any one who should assert the contrary. It becomes of importance then to prove how entirely groundless all his charges were; to show how discreditable it was to the people of this country that they should be led astray by such a guide; and to draw from this instance of delusion a lesson and a warning against lending an ear to plausible, and active, and unscrupulous slanderers.

Before proceeding with our subject, however, we may stop to consider an example of the effect produced upon public opinion, even permanently, by the invention of some phrase easily remembered, and tending to preserve the malignity of the fiction by the epigram that seems in some sort to embalm an otherwise perishable slander. At a moment of great popular excitement (July, 1769), the Livery of the city of London presented an address to the Sovereign, in which they closed a long list of grievances with the statement that "instead of

punishment, honours had been bestowed upon a paymaster, the public defaulter of unaccounted millions." The recent elevation to the peerage of Henry Fox, the first Lord Holland, lately Paymaster of the Forces, was plainly here signified; and it is a humiliating reflection to those who justly prize public opinion, that it should be the sport and the dupe of such audacious impostures. For it is vain to deny that the epithet here bestowed upon that statesman has, in a certain degree, clung to his memory, and given an impression injurious to the purity of his character. The calumny being promulgated by an irresponsible body, and in an address to the throne, no proceedings at law were possible, at least none that would not have been attended with extreme difficulty in a technical view. Lord Holland, however, lost no time in giving the tale his most peremptory contradiction, and by an appeal to facts as notorious to all the world as the sun at noon-day tide. The falsehood, like most others, rested upon a truth, but a truth grossly perverted. The moneys which had passed through the Paymaster's hands were, in one sense, unaccounted; that is, the accounts of his office had not yet been wound up; but they had been delivered in, were under the examination of the auditors, and awaited the final report of those functionaries. It was shown that those accounts, which extended over the years 1757, 1758, and 1759, had reference

to military expeditions in many distant parts of the globe, and that they related to a larger expenditure than in any former war had ever been incurred. Yet they were declared nine years after the expenditure closed. But Mr. Winnington's for 1744, 1745, and 1746, were only declared in 1760, or fourteen years after their close; and Lord Chatham's, which closed in 1755, were not declared in 1769. It is also to be observed that Lord Chatham had ceased to hold the office in 1755, and had not declared his accounts fourteen years after; whereas Lord Holland had only resigned the paymastership three years and a half before the charge was made. He had also paid over in eight years balances to the amount of above 900,000*l.*, arising from savings which he had effected in the sums voted for different services. It would certainly not be easy to furnish a more complete answer than the calumnious assertion of the Livery thus received. But it is also certain that the calumny long survived its triumphant refutation. Even in the later periods of party warfare it was revived against the illustrious son of its object; men of our day can well remember Mr. Fox having it often flung in his teeth, that he was sprung from the "defaulter of unaccounted millions."

The foul slanders of Junius upon the Duke o Bedford differ from the calumny of the Livery in this—that they plainly furnish, to any one who attentively considers them, complete proof of their

own falsehood, in by far the most material particular, and consequently should at once fall to the ground as generally discredited. And they would so fall did not men make it a rule to encourage slander and defeat the ends of truth and justice, by lending a willing ear to all that is alleged against their fellow-creatures, and overlooking, or straightway forgetting, all that is urged in their defence.

The hatred which this writer evinced towards the Duke rests, as far as it has any public ground to support it, upon the junction of the Bedford party with Lord Bute against Lord Chatham; but in all probability there was some sordid or spiteful feeling of a personal kind at the root of it. Lord Chatham had been, like all the great men of the day, the object of the slanderer's fiercest vituperation. He had repeatedly treated him as a "lunatic," and frequently as a "tyrant." Lurking under the name of Publicola, he had lavished upon him every term of gross abuse which his vocabulary supplied; a "man purely and perfectly bad;" a "traitor;" an "intriguer;" a "hypocrite;" "so black a villain, that a gibbet is too honourable a situation for his carcase" (*Woodfall's Junius*, ii. 458). But in the course of a few months from his last attack, which was in 1770, he became appeased; and, whether from beginning to favour Lord Chatham the year before, or from mere hatred towards Lord Bute, his fury broke forth against the Bedford

party, in the letter to its chief, which has been the subject of so much observation, and is certainly the most scurrilous of any that were printed under the name of Junius.

This letter, beside a number of vague charges, amounting only to intemperate abuse, accuses the Duke in his public capacity of having betrayed his trust as ambassador in negotiating the peace of Paris, and betrayed it for money: in his private capacity it charges him with avarice, and hardness of heart towards his only son, for whose sudden death, by a fall from his horse, no due feeling was evinced; and in a capacity partly public, partly private, it charges him with grossly insulting the sovereign at an audience of his Majesty. There is, further, an allusion to a scene at Lichfield races, represented as derogatory to his honour as a gentleman.

1. He is accused of giving up Belleisle, Goree, Guadaloupe, St. Lucia, Martinique, the Fishery, the Havanna. The proof of this, the main charge, being corrupt conduct, rests upon the Duke's "pecuniary character," which made it "impossible that so many public sacrifices should be made without some private compensation." This "internal evidence," we are told, is "beyond all the legal proofs of a court of justice" (i. 510). When pressed by Sir W. Draper for proofs, the slanderer impudently reiterated his assertion, that the Duke's conduct "carried with it an internal and convincing

evidence against him," adding, that "if nothing could be true but what might be proved in a court of justice, then the Christian religion itself, which rests upon internal evidence, never could have been received and established" (ii. 25). Finally, he refers to De Torcy's Memoirs for a statement that "a bribe may be offered to a duke and *only not be accepted*," meaning the Duke of Marlborough; from which the inference is that, because some one has said one man was offered a bribe which he refused, therefore, another man must be believed to have been offered one and accepted it.

That any degree of public malice should have blinded men to the utter flimsiness of this charge, or that any power of epigrammatic writing should have prevented all readers from flinging it away in scorn, seems really incredible. Yet this is not all, nor even the greater part, of the revolting absurdity. The charge is, upon the face of it, false, for it is absolutely impossible. To suppose that an ambassador sent to negotiate a peace has the power to accept any terms whatever which his employers do not authorise him to accept, but above all, an ambassador sent to Paris and corresponding daily with the cabinet in London, argues a degree of thoughtless folly wholly incredible. As well might the courier who carries the instructions be supposed to have the power of giving up islands and fisheries, as the negotiator. Besides, the whole course of

the negotiation in 1762 was conformable to that which, in 1761, had been begun while Lord Chatham was in office. The islands of Guadaloupe and St. Lucia had been offered by him, and Canada had been offered by France. These were the main body of the cessions on either side. The refusal, in 1761, to make any peace without the King of Prussia, and the treating without him, in 1762, was the main difference in the two cases, and was amply accounted for by the abject state of that prince's fortunes in the former year, and his triumphant position in the latter.

The opinions of all men on the merits of this peace have long since been settled, and even at the time it escaped the fate which faction reserved for the next treaty that was made to terminate a war; it was approved by immense majorities of both Houses of Parliament—without a division in the Lords, by 319 to 65 in the Commons. The most eminent authorities both at home and abroad pronounced unbounded praise upon the ability displayed by the Duke in the negotiation. The King himself was beyond measure pleased with it, and showed his sense of the services rendered in a marked manner. The ministers declared that no man but the Duke could have so conducted the negotiation, and that no man had ever rendered so great a service to the state. The veteran diplomatists, Sir Joseph Yorke and Sir Andrew Mitchell, affixed to the treaty the stamp of

their hearty admiration; and Lord Granville, having only lived to witness the event, declared that "the most glorious war had been terminated by the most honourable peace this country ever saw."

Finally, the story of French gold having been used, not, indeed, to perform the impossible feat of bribing our ambassador's surrender of colonies, but to gain over his employers, had been imputed by an idle busy-body, called Dr. Musgrave, some time before Junius took up the slander, and a committee of the House of Commons, having soon after investigated the matter, had reported that it was utterly frivolous and destitute of all foundation. Now this is fatal to the credit of Junius for veracity, and at once and clearly convicts him of fabrication. For the parties named by Musgrave were the Dowager Princess of Wales, Lord Bute, and Lord Holland; the Duke of Bedford not being named or alluded to at all in the story.* Yet Junius revives the refuted tale after it had been notoriously repudiated by the political enemies of the parties accused; and he transfers the story to a party on whom, frivolous as it was, the slander never had been made by its author to attach.

In one accidental particular, the ambassador had an opportunity of acting upon his own responsibility,

* Woodfall (i. 571), with a most inexcusable inaccuracy, gives the story as if it had comprehended the Duke. He never was in any way referred to.

and did act in the only way in which an honourable man could; and his interposition was effectual to the only extent to which a negotiator ever can effectually operate in his individual capacity—the extent of preventing a premature signature of the treaty. The East India Company had, by a strange oversight, confined their demand of a stipulation in their own favour to a period before the acquisition of their chief conquests; and the article in the preliminaries was drawn and signed accordingly. The error being pointed out to the Duke by a private individual, he immediately repaired to the French minister, and insisted upon an alteration of the provisions. The minister, the Duc de Choiseul, relied on the signed preliminaries; but the Duke of Bedford firmly declared that he should at once return to London, and "submit his head to the discretion of Parliament," taking upon himself the error of his instructions. The threat was effectual, and the change was made, which restored a territory having the revenue of half a million sterling to the Company and the Crown.

2. The charge of parsimony against the Duke rests upon the same foundation on which a like charge might have been brought against my most dear and respected friend, the late Duke, his grandson, one of the most generous of men. His domestic economy was regulated with care, and showed that superintendence of the head of the family over

its concerns, and that spirit of order, which, with qualities of a much higher nature, has ever distinguished the House of Russell. That there was any want of liberality in the treatment of the lamented person whose sudden death proved the severest blow to the hopes of his kindred, may be at once denied, on the fact made public at the time that Lord Tavistock's allowance was 8000*l.* a year; that his widow's jointure was increased greatly beyond her marriage settlement on his decease; and that 50,000*l.* were immediately provided for the posthumous child of whom she was *enceinte* at the time of the accident.* The story of the father's affliction having been less poignant than might have been expected, rests on his having, as speedily as he could, sought the distraction which is to be found in the discharge of public duties. But I can add, that woeful experience speaks to the possibility of performing these during a course of years, when domestic affliction has wholly prevented its victim from indulging in the most ordinary relaxations of social life. The brutal slanderer who could interfere at such a moment to outrage the grief of a parent, cared as little for the truth of his charge as he could know of the feelings which he invaded.

Other testimony, and of a very different value, exists to the complete refutation of his cold-blood

* Lord William Russell, unhappily murdered in the year 1840.

calumnies. The journal of the Duke has been published, and though up to the hour of his affliction there is a regular entry of each day's occurrences, a whole month appears in blank from the Marquess's accident, which only proved fatal at the end of above a fortnight. Horace Walpole, who writes at the time and was no careless collector of scandal, describes him as "a man of inflexible honesty and love for his country;" vindicates him from all suspicion of parsimony; declares that if he loved money it was only "in order to use it sensibly and with kindness to others;" and says not a word to countenance the imputation of his showing an unfeeling nature.* Another witness of greater fame, no less than David Hume, then Under Secretary of State, bears a more direct testimony to the passage in question of the Duke's life. Writing to Madame de Barbantane, he says that "no one at first believed he would have survived the loss;" and in a letter written between three and four months later to Madame de Boufflers, he says, it was fortunate for the Duke that the calumny came upon him "when public business gave his friends an opportunity of making him take a part to distract his attention, but that he has not yet recovered

* In a new publication since this was printed, one letter of Walpole represents the Duke as almost killed by the shock, and only saved by his body breaking out in boils: a subsequent letter treats his attendance in Parliament as unfeeling. But the former passage is fact; the latter is surmise.

the shock." He adds that the Duchess, "to whom the world had not ascribed so great a degree of sensibility, is still inconsolable." Such testimony may well be deemed to countervail the fabrications of Junius. But Junius is read because of his style, which a corrupt taste prizes very far above its value, and the character of a just, a generous, and an amiable man is sacrificed to the morbid taste for slander steeped in epigram.*

3. The story respecting an insult offered to the King is at once refuted by naming that sovereign: it was George III. Who can for a moment believe that any man durst treat him as Junius impudently describes, partly in the foul text, partly in the fouler note? "He demanded an audience of the King; reproached him in plain terms with his duplicity, baseness, falsehood, treachery, hypocrisy, repeatedly gave him the lie, and left him in convulsions." This was in the year 1769, when George III. had nearly attained his thirtieth year. Is it necessary to say more than to express our special wonder at any credit having ever been given to a writer so shamelessly careless of the accuracy or even probability of his statements—a writer who

* The cause of truth is much indebted to the industry of Mr. Wright, the able and well-informed editor of Sir H. Cavendish's admirable debates, in bringing together these extracts from contemporary writers of reputation to refute the calumnies of Junius.

gravely tells things which no mortal can for a moment believe?* This may at least be said for the periodical press of the present day,—that those who conduct it, and who are, many of them, careless enough of the truth, indifferent enough to the falsehoods which they propagate, and ready enough to circulate the tales they hear against those whom they are pleased to assail, nevertheless feel the necessity of preserving some colour of probability, of keeping some measure in their relations; and would dread the loss of their credit for common sense, as well as veracity, were they to print such tales as Junius possibly believed and certainly without scruple circulated.

4. That some man, said to have been intoxicated, on a race-course, insulted the Duke of Bedford, Lord Trentham (afterwards Lord Stafford), and Mr. Rigby, is very possible. It was the outrage of a Jacobite mob in 1746,† enraged at their recent failure, and the parties were tried for the riot. That the chief assailant was of a description which

* He used strong and honest language in remonstrating with the King, but never anything approaching to the violence and insult described by Junius.

† The Duke was staying on a visit at Lord Trentham's, and the Gower family had just left the Pretender's party, to so great indignation of the Jacobites, that Dr. Johnson names them to exemplify the word *renegade* in the first edition of his Dictionary. The scuffle was plainly directed, by the Jacobite mob, against the party coming to the race-course from Trentham, and the Duke chanced to be one.

made any personal revenge wholly out of the question has never been doubted. The same accident might have happened to the Duke of Marlborough or Marshal Turenne. Who but a slanderer of the basest order would ever have even made an allusion to such a matter?

It is hardly necessary to add anything in illustration of the utter indifference to all consideration of truth or falsehood which formed part of this writer's nature. But a singular instance of this remains, as it were, on record, and it shows so mean a disposition that we may, with some benefit, contemplate it. That anonymous writers will make assertions which they never would venture upon were their persons known, is a position so highly probable that we require little evidence to make us believe it. But their whole conduct, while skulking behind a veil, proves it. We have not often, however, such a demonstration of this truth as Junius has furnished. He had written a letter in answer to some one pretending to be a female and signing her name *Junia*, but since avowed to be Caleb Whitefoord. This answer is in a tone of somewhat more than gallantry: it savours of indecency; it has more than mere levity. Whether for this reason, or because the discovery of his having been taken in to write such an amorous epistle to a man seemed likely to cover the party with inextinguishable ridicule, and, from the caprice

of the public, to ruin a popularity which the more grave crimes of malice and falsehood had failed to injure; certain it is that Junius repented having written his answer, and he then scrupled not to dictate a lie which his poor publisher printed as his own assertion, knowing it to be false. "We have some reason to suspect (says Mr. Woodfall, four days after the unfortunate letter appeared) that the letter signed 'Junius,' inserted in this paper of Thursday last, was not written by the real Junius; though we imagine it to have been sent by some one of his waggish friends, who has taken great pains to write in a manner similar to that of Junius, which observation escaped us at that time. The printer takes the liberty to hint that it will not do a second time." —*Edit.* (iii. 218.) The substance of this falsehood, nay, almost every word of the first and chief sentence of it, was written by Junius himself, and sent to the printer in a letter containing what in all likelihood is another falsehood, namely, that "there are people about him whom he does not wish to contradict, and who had rather see Junius in the papers ever so improperly than not at all" (i. 199). He desires Mr. Woodfall to "hit off something more plausible if he can, but without a positive assertion;" intending, of course, should he ever be discovered and should not be able to fix the contradiction upon his printer, to deny that he had told the lie directly. In the history of anonymous

writings there have been few passages more mean, few reflecting more light on the consequences of a habit of anonymous slander. This complicated scene of falsehood was enacting at the very time that the letter to the Duke of Bedford was in preparation; that letter is announced in the 'Advertiser' in consequence of a note dated Sept. 15, at which time, we are told, it was "copying out." The note desiring the untruth to be inserted is dated Sept. 10th. Surely some discredit naturally rests on the unvouched assertions of a person who, while engaged in committing them to paper, is also occupied with framing elaborate falsehoods for the purpose of extricating himself from a difficulty of his own creating. Such, at least, would be the result in a case of any other description, touching any witness who came forward in his own proper person to accuse his neighbour. But there prevails a most inexplicable disposition in the public to judge nameless calumniators by different rules from those which all mankind apply to known accusers; and to make the very fact of their skulking in the dark, the very circumstance of their being unknown to all the world, a ground of giving credence to them, and a protection to them from the ordinary objections to discreditable testimony. Because they do not appear, they are supposed unassailable, whereas the inference should rather be that they have good reason for not showing themselves.

There is no characteristic more universal of such writers than their indiscriminate railing. They are, in very deed, no respecters of persons. Their hand is against every one. Obscure themselves, they habitually envy all fame. Low far beneath any honest man's level, as, they feel conscious, they must sink were the veil removed which conceals them, they delight in pulling all others down to nearly the same degradation with themselves. Nor is it envy alone that stimulates their malignant appetite. Instinctively aware of the scorn in which they are held, and sure that, were the darkness dispelled in which they lurk, all hands would be raised against them, they obey the animal impulse of fear when they indulge in a propensity to work destruction.

To these remarks Junius affords no exception. It is untrue to assert, as some have done, that he had his idols. Lord Chatham has been named, and we have seen how, more than any other statesman of his age, that venerable patriot was assailed by his foulest abuse; assaulted not indeed under the same, but another disguise. For as unmingled vituperation would pall upon the appetite, as bitters like sweets may require to be dashed and varied, even Junius found it necessary to give some relief to his pictures, and to paint some figures in a brighter hue; not to mention that contrast becomes necessary in order to blame the more effectually, or, as Sir Philip Francis in his own person used to

say, "Praise is bearable when used *in odium tertii*." Eulogy, however, thus bestowed by compulsion, was soon repented and begrudged; nor could so ungenial a soil long support so exotic a plant. If Junius could not with safety for his consistency extirpate it, he ceased to foster it, and pruned it, or let it die away; and he had always the resource of changing his mask, and then Publicola could make up by increased virulence and scurrility for the temporary laudation into which Junius had been driven or beguiled.

It is almost equally incorrect to say that Lord Camden was not attacked by Junius. He is in one place represented as "an object neither of respect nor esteem," and as having at different times held every kind of opinion and conduct (iii. 174); in another as the "invader of the constitution, after trampling the laws under his feet" (ii. 472); and, in a third, as "an apostate lawyer, weak enough to sacrifice his own character, and base enough to betray the laws of his country" (ii. 457).*

The attacks of Junius upon Lord Mansfield have been treated of in a former volume, and it has been shown how utterly void of foundation all thos charges were. In fact, the whole originated in

* It appears to me that the weight of internal evidence is so strong in favour of Mr. Burke being the author of Junius, that his own positive and solemn denial alone can make us disbelieve it. (Cor. i. 275.)

the most profound ignorance of the subject which the nameless slanderer had undertaken to discuss. That his venom, however, produced some effect is undeniable. The spirit of party; the general desire to see a great man humbled; above all, the feeling which, it must be confessed, prevails in the people of this country, unfriendly to the judicial dignity, though sufficiently respectful towards the administration of justice in the abstract—all worked with the authors and disseminators of the groundless invectives, and made men not indeed suppose that Lord Mansfield was "the very worst and most dangerous man in the whole kingdom," but that he was open to attack beyond other judges, and was no longer so invulnerable as the voice of the profession had hitherto pronounced him to be. As a proof how much progress unprosecuted slander had made in undermining this great magistrate's reputation, at least for a moment, take the following passage in Horace Walpole's Letters: it was written in the beginning of the session, 1770-1. "If we have nothing else to do after the holidays, we are to amuse ourselves with worrying Lord Mansfield, who, between irregularities in his court, timidity, and want of judgment, has lowered himself to be the object of hatred to many, and of contempt to every body. I do not think that he could re-establish himself if he were to fight Governor Johnstone" (*Letters to Sir H. Mann*, ii. 120).

The effects of continually assailing a judge are somewhat singular. Because it is an unquestionable position that judicial reputation ought never to be rashly attacked, and that all society have an interest in upholding it, there arises a most preposterous notion that when this rule is violated there must be some ground for the imputations cast; and thus the principle which should be the safeguard of the Bench is converted into a means of sapping its authority. Add to this, that no great judge can have long filled his place without giving offence to numerous individuals and to many members of his own profession, even although he may not have had the disposal of patronage, the most fruitful of all the sources of official unpopularity. A judge too, when assailed, is extremely helpless. He is essentially a passive character. He has no means of exhibiting whatever pugnacity he may be endowed with, even in self-defence. This, which with all generous natures would operate as his safeguard, only furnishes an additional temptation to meaner beings, and encourages them in their assaults. The result certainly is that temporary clouds generally overcast the brightest judicial reputation at some period of its course. But it is equally certain that such clouds speedily pass away; no man now thinks the worse of Lord Mansfield because of Junius.

It is not even true that the family of Lord Holland were always treated with respect, although from the certain fact of the Francises, whom that family patronised, being at least connected with Junius, if not the real authors of the Letters, it could hardly be supposed that it would ever be the object of his assiduous abuse. But nothing can be more contemptuous than his treatment of Mr. Fox, whom he suspected, evidently against all probability, of having written an answer to one of his Letters; and while he plainly states that Lord Holland is "not invulnerable," he throws out a dark threat to the son, and, indeed, to the whole family, to beware how they provoke him (iii. 410); signing the letter "Anti-Fox."

The only public man of any mark whom he spares appears to be Mr. George Grenville. This exemption he certainly owed much less to his truly respectable and indeed invulnerable character, than to the circumstance of his being anything rather than a brilliant person, and to the accident of his being wholly removed from power and office, and almost from all political influence, during the last years of his honourable and useful life. But it must further be remarked, that he died long before the close of Junius's writings. These extended to May, 1772, under various names, and under the most famous of his signatures, to the month of January

in that year; and Mr. Grenville died in November, 1770, before more than half the career of Junius had been accomplished.

So universal was his attack.—But although the remark be trite, that he who accuses all men only convicts one, it is, after all, on the audacity of his falsehoods that the bad character of this writer, like that of all his tribe, rests, although to this his temporary influence was in great part owing. His scurrilous abuse of the Duke of Grafton and Lord North can hardly be termed mere licentious ribaldry, for truth is plainly violated when the former is called "the infamous Duke of Grafton," one "branded with the infamy of a notorious breach of trust," one "degraded below the condition of a man;"—when the latter is described "as totally regardless of his own honour," noted for "the blackness of his heart," and a "steady perseverance in infamy;" "long since discarding every principle of conscience;" a man "every one action of whose life for two years has separately deserved imprisonment." But many specific accusations were scattered abroad. We have seen the pure invention of the writer's malice in the falsehoods deliberately told against the Duke of Bedford, especially in the fabrication respecting the Peace of Paris; and we have seen how he grafted that untruth upon the story imported by Dr. Musgrave, and relating to other parties. That his

motive was to hit in the point which he believed was the most sensitive, is beyond all doubt. The Duke's public character mainly rested on the success of his negotiation; and, as he was naturally tenacious of that reputation, so were the people of this country equally alive to any suspicion of pecuniary corruption in public men. Therefore it was that the species of falsehood must be coined which should meet those several demands for it. But we are not left to conjecture upon this point. Under the writer's own hand we have a history of the designs over which his heart brooded. The printer had been deterred from publishing a letter, under the signature of Vindex, by the fear of prosecution. Junius tells him that the charge contained in it is the only one to which its object has not long been callous. The intended victim was the King; the charge was of cowardice! "I must tell you," says Junius, "and with positive certainty, that our gracious —— is as callous as stockfish to every thing but the reproach of *cowardice*. That alone is able to set the humours afloat. After a paper of that kind he won't eat meat for a week" (i. 221). I need hardly add that the utter falsehood of such a charge was at all times of George III.'s life admitted by all parties, even in the utmost heat of factious conflict. But this writer, with the malignity of a fiend, frames his falsehood in order to assail with certainty the tender point of his victim.

And such, we may be assured, are the motives which actuate the greater number of those who drive the base trade of the concealed slanderer.

It is truly painful to reflect upon the success which attended the disreputable labours of this author, at a time when good writing was very rare in ephemeral publications, and long before the periodical press had lost its influence and respectability by the excesses into which of late years it has run. The boldness of the assaults made upon individuals, full as much as the power with which they were conducted, had the effect of overawing the public, and in many cases of silencing those against whom they operated. The very circumstance which should have impaired their force gave them, as it always does, additional impression. The "*unknown*" and the "*grand*" were, as usual, confounded. The same things which, said by any one individual, though respectable in himself, would have had but little weight, seemed to proceed from an awful and undefined power, which might be one or many, and might possess an importance that the imagination was left to expand at will. But it is still more painful to observe such men as Lord North and Mr. Burke lending themselves to support the popular delusion; the one from his wonted candour and good humour, the other from factious motives; both, in some degree, from the kind of fear which makes superstitious men sacrifice to evil spirits.

Lord North calls him "the great Boar of the Forest," and the "mighty Junius:" Mr. Burke wishes that Parliament had the benefit of "his knowledge, his firmness, his integrity." It would have been a worthier task for Lord North to bring his unblushing falsehoods to trial before a jury of his country, as the Duke of Bedford should certainly have done; and it would have conferred more honour on Mr. Burke to have joined with all good men in reprobating the practices by which one of the foulest of libellers degraded the liberty of the press, and prepared the way for the excesses which Mr. Burke himself was fated afterwards to deplore, and the contempt into which his perspicacity did not then perceive this great safeguard of liberty was at a still later period in peril of falling.

At all events, we who now have had leisure to contemplate the period in which those great statesmen lived, and to weigh the justice of their tributes to this too celebrated writer, have the duty cast upon us of exposing his falsehoods, and of rendering a necessary, though a tardy reparation, to those characters which he unscrupulously assailed. Nor is there any duty the discharge of which brings along with it more true satisfaction. It may be humble in its execution, but its aim is lofty; it may be feebly performed, but it is exceedingly grateful. Nor can any one rise from his labours with a more heartfelt satisfaction than he who

thinks that he has contributed to rescue merit from obloquy, and to further the most sacred of all human interests, the defeat of injustice—injustice in which they share who fear to resist it. "Sed injustitiæ genera duo sunt; unum eorum qui inferunt; alterum eorum qui ab iis, quibus infertur, si possunt, non propulsant injuriam." (Cic. *De Off.*, I.)*

* "But of injustice there are two kinds: one, theirs who do an injury; the other, theirs who do not prevent an injury when they have the power."

EARL CAMDEN.

AMONG the names that adorn the legal profession, there are few which stand so high as that of Camden. His reputation as a lawyer could not have gained this place for him; even as a judge he would not have commanded such distinction, though on the Bench he greatly increased the fame which he brought from the bar; but in the senate he had no professional superior, and his integrity for the most part spotless in all the relations of public life, with the manly firmness which he uniformly displayed in maintaining the free principles of the constitution, wholly unmixed with any leaning towards extravagant popular opinions, or any disposition to court vulgar favour, justly entitle him to the very highest place among the Judges of England.

It was a remarkable circumstance that although he entered the profession with all the advantages of elevated station, he was less successful in its pursuit, and came more slowly into its emoluments, than almost all others that can be mentioned who have raised themselves to its more eminent heights from

humble and even obscure beginnings. One can hardly name any other chief judge, except Bacon himself, who was the son of a chief justice. Lord Camden's father presided in the Court of King's Bench. He himself was called to the bar in his twenty-fourth year, and he continued to await the arrival of clients,—their "knocks at his door while the cock crew," *—for fourteen long years; but to wait in vain. In his thirty-eighth year he was, like Lord Eldon, on the point of retiring from Westminster Hall, and had resolved to shelter himself from the frowns of fortune within the walls of his College, there to live upon his fellowship till a vacant living in the country should fall to his share. This resolution he communicated to his friend Henley, afterwards so well known first as Lord Keeper, and then as Lord Chancellor Northington, who vainly endeavoured to rally him out of a despondency for which, it must be confessed, there seemed good ground. He consented, however, at his friend's solicitation, to go once more the Western Circuit, and through his kind offices received a brief as his junior in an important cause—offices not perhaps in those days so severely reprobated as they now are by the more stern etiquette of the profession.

The leader's accidental illness threw upon Mr. Pratt the conduct of the cause; and his great elo-

* Sub galli cantum, consultor ubi ostia pulsat.—*Hor.*

quence, and his far more important qualifications of legal knowledge and practical expertness in the management of business, at once opened for him the way to a brilliant fortune. His success was now secure. After eight years of very considerable practice, though unequal to that which most other great leaders have attained, he was made at once Attorney-General; and three years after, in 1762, raised to the Bench as Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, "the pillow," according to Lord Coke, "whereon the attorney doth rest his head." In 1749, when in his forty-sixth year, he had been chosen to represent the borough of Downton, but during his short experience of the House of Commons he appears not to have gained any distinction. The rewards of parliamentary ambition were reserved to a later period of his life.

Of his forensic talents no records remain, beyond a general impression of the accuracy which he showed as a lawyer, though not of the most profound description; *par negotiis neque supra.** The fame of his legal arguments in Westminster Hall is not of that species which at once rises to the mind on the mention of Dunning's name, or Wallace's, the admirable variety and fertility of whose juridical resources were such that "their points" are spoken of to this day, and spoken of with admiration. But he greatly excelled them both in

* Equal to business, no more.

powers as a leader at Nisi Prius; and his eloquence was apparently of that chaste and gentle but persuasive kind which distinguished his great rival Murray, and made all the readers of Milton involuntarily apply to him the famous portraiture of Belial—

> Belial, in act more graceful and humane—
> A fairer person lost not heaven; he seemed
> For dignity composed and high exploit.
> His tongue
> Dropt manna, and could make the worse appear
> The better reason.

But his eminently judicial qualifications shone forth conspicuously when he rose into their proper sphere. His unwearied patience, his unbroken suavity of manner, his unruffled calmness of temper, the more to be admired because it was the victory of determined resolution over a natural infirmity, his lucid clearness of comprehension and of statement, his memory singularly powerful and retentive, his great anxiety to sift each case to the very bottom, and his scrupulous, perhaps extreme, care to assign the reasons for every portion of his opinions, went far to constitute a perfect judge, inferior in value though these qualities might be to the profound learning that has marked some great magistrates, like Lord Eldon and the older lawyers; and, perhaps, to the union of marvellous quickness with sure sagacity, for which others, like the Kenyons, and the Holroyds, and the Littledales, have been

famous. There was, however, in Lord Camden no deficiency of legal accomplishments, nor any want either of quickness or of perspicacity in the conduct of judicial business. And it must ever be remembered, that as a judge has always, or almost always, the statements and the suggestions of all parties before him, and is thus rather placed in a passive situation, those faculties of rapid perception and of deep penetration, that circumspection which no risk can escape, and that decision, at once prompt and firm, which instantly meets the exigencies of each sudden emergency, are far less essential virtues, far less useful attributes of the ermine than of the gown. It is but rarely that a judge can be taken off his guard; never in any important civil suit, unless by some accident there is an extreme overmatch of the advocate upon one side compared with his antagonist; and chiefly possible in criminal cases, disposed of by a law which lies within a narrow compass, and connected with facts generally of ordinary occurrence and easy to deal with. It would thus be extremely erroneous to underrate Lord Camden's judicial qualities, merely because there have been many more consummate masters of English jurisprudence upon the bench, and some even of more extraordinary sagacity, quickness, and penetration.

In the great qualities of sustained dignity, chaste, and therefore, not exaggerated propriety of demean-

our, absolute impartiality, and fearless declaration of his conscientious opinion, how surely soever it might expose him to the frowns of power, or the yet more galling censure of his profession, this eminent magistrate had no superior, very few equals. That profession is ever singularly jealous on such points, and particularly prone to suspect such conduct as proceeding from a love of popularity, which these learned men, having but rarely been able to taste, are extremely apt to pronounce unsavoury, citing the illustrious chancellor and philosopher, of whom they peradventure have only read the one saying, that "a popular judge is a deformed thing, and *plaudites* are fitter for players than for magistrates." This propensity of the bar Lord Camden well knew; but he felt above all dread of its effects, conscious that he was instigated by no childish love of plebeian applause, and only acted the part of an honest man in showing by his judgments those sentiments which ever filled his breast—a sincere love of public liberty, and an entire devotion to the principles of the British constitution.

The decision of this great judge upon the question of general warrants, raised by the attempt of Lord Halifax, the Secretary of State, to search the house of Wilkes, and commit him to prison without a specification of his person or of his offence, further than stating it to be the publication

of a seditious and treasonable paper, is well known to every reader; and no less known is the marked contrast of the dignified and severe justice of the bench, and the trumpery vapouring talk of the profligate trader in mob favour, whose oppression, by illegal exercise of power, had arrayed in his defence even those who most scorned his character and distrusted his professions. It was on the ground of his arrest being a breach of his parliamentary privilege that he obtained his discharge. This cause came before Lord Camden, as did the actions brought in consequence against the Secretary of State's messengers, who had executed the general warrant, the year after the Chief Justice came upon the bench. On the *habeas corpus* he had expressed an opinion, in which his brethren concurred, that such warrants were justified by numerous precedents. But when he tried at Nisi Prius the actions for false imprisonment, in which the legality of general warrants came in question, he declared his opinion to be that they were illegal, adding these memorable words—"If the other judges, and the highest authority in this kingdom, the House of Peers, should pronounce my opinion erroneous, I submit, as will become me, and kiss the rod; but I must say, that I shall always consider it as a rod of iron for the chastisement of the people of Great Britain."

The tenour of the warrant was, "to make strict

and diligent search for the authors and printers of a certain seditious and treasonable paper, entitled No. 45 of the North Briton, and them, or any of them being so found, to apprehend and secure, together with their papers, and to bring them in safe custody to be examined, and further dealt with according to law." The special jury who tried the cause returned, after a trial of fifteen hours, a verdict for the plaintiff, with 1000*l.* damages, in entire accordance with the Chief Justice's direction.

When a new trial was moved for misdirection, his Lordship spoke these memorable words—"To enter a man's house, by virtue of a nameless warrant, in order to procure evidence, is worse than the Spanish Inquisition—a law under which no Englishman would wish to live an hour. It is a daring public attack upon the liberty of the subject, and in violation of the 29th chapter of Magna Charta (*Nullus liber homo*, &c.), which is directly pointed against that arbitrary power."*

The applause of his countrymen, that applause which Lord Mansfield so eloquently described as following great actions and not run after, was dealt out to the Chief Justice in a liberal measure. The corporations of Dublin, Bath, Exeter, Norwich,

* Buckle *v.* Money, 2 Wils. 205. The imprisonment had only been for six hours, and the treatment unexceptionable; but the Chief Justice had charged the jury on its being a violation of public liberty.

besought him to accept their freedom. London herself enrolled him among her citizens, and placed upon the walls of Guildhall his portrait, magnificently painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds, with an inscription at once simple, chaste, and true: "*In honorem tanti viri Anglicæ libertatis lege assertoris.*" *

Two years only elapsed before he was raised to the peerage; and in 1766 he succeeded his early and steady friend, Lord Northington, as Chancellor. He held the great seal about four years.

If his decisions in the Court of Chancery, during that period, have never been the subject of great panegyric, they certainly have escaped all censure; and he was of too firm a mind, and, at the same time, too discreet and modest, to fall into the great error which shipwrecked the judicial fame of future equity judges, well versed in the practice of their courts. He neither, like some of his successors, so vacillated, so disliked to pronounce the opinion he had formed, as to put off the evil day of decision, and overwhelm his court with causes heard and undetermined; nor did he place, like others, his chief praise in unhesitating and promiscuous dispatch of business, directing all his efforts to suppressing the arguments which it was his duty to hear, and estimating his merit by the number, rather than the excellence, of his judgments, so as

* In honour of so eminent a man, assertor by the law of English liberty.

to draw from Sir Samuel Romilly the comparison, that he preferred the slow justice of the Chancellor to his Deputy's speedy injustice. From these opposite rocks the calm and even course of Lord Camden's administration of justice preserved him safe. And, beside obtaining the praise of having dispatched all the court's business in a manner to give the suitors and the bar satisfaction, he has left judgments on important questions of great merit. It may be enough to mention the well-known case upon Bills of Review, Smith *v.* Clay, which fixes the law of the court upon that very important question; and which he decided in an argument, tolerably well preserved in some reports, an argument combining the highest qualities of judicial eloquence. His judgment in the great case of Duke of Northumberland *v.* Earl of Egremont, after an argument of several days, also possesses rare excellence.*

In parliament, his judicial as well as political conduct may be deservedly regarded as a model. In the celebrated Douglas cause, his argument on moving the reversal of the Court of Session's judgment, and establishing the legitimacy of the

* Ambler, 647 and 657, contains a very abridged account of these cases. I was favoured with Sir S. Romilly's full notes of my illustrious predecessor's judgment in Smith *v.* Clay, and communicated it to the Court during the first year that I held the Great Seal.

party claiming the Duke of Douglas's large estates, possesses the greatest merit. Lord Mansfield's engaged more of the public attention at the time, chiefly because of the famous letters of Andrew Stuart, to which it gave rise, and in which he was most severely and ably attacked. But whoever reads both speeches will find it difficult to refuse the preference to the Chancellor's; although there is every reason to believe that the Chief Justice's has been very imperfectly preserved. Both are to be found in the second volume of the *Collectanea Juridica.* But Andrew Stuart treats Lord Mansfield's as never having been published fairly, and from authority; and he dares him to the publication, in terms which seem to imply an intimation that there was something not convenient to give through the press, and a suspicion that the cautious Chief Justice would not venture upon the course pointed out.* It is moreover quite certain that the printed account to which I have referred contains no mention of Andrew Stuart, hardly any reference to him, while Lord Camden's speech is filled with direct charges distinctly brought against

* "If the multiplicity of your other affairs be assigned as an excuse for avoiding to give any answer, there is yet another method which may serve to afford me satisfaction, and may possibly do justice to yourself without consuming much of your time. *It is to publish to the world your speech against me in the Douglas cause.*"—Letter iv. page 38. (The Italics are in the original.)

him; and yet the defence is entirely made as against Lord Mansfield, and no assault whatever is made upon Lord Camden. Lord Mansfield's judgment, as reported, is a wretched performance, and chiefly rests on this position, that a woman of Lady Jane Douglas's illustrious descent could not be guilty of a fraud.

I have spoken of Lord Camden's judicial conduct in the Courts of Westminster Hall, and in the House of Lords. He was, however, fully more eminent in the senate than in the forum. He brought into parliament a high professional reputation; and beside the reputation which this and his great office gave him, his talents were peculiarly suited to shine in debate. An admirable memory, ample quickness of apprehension, sufficient learning for all ordinary occasions, a clear and pleasing elocution, great command of himself, a natural vivacity which gave his manner animation without effort, rendered him one of the most impressive and pleasing speakers of his time. His conduct, too, had been uniform and consistent; he was always, whether on the Bench, or in the Council, or in Parliament, the friend of constitutional liberty, of which he steadily proved the honest but the temperate defender. He had taken a part which indicated some considerable difference with his colleagues, on the important question of American taxation; but after he had been Chancellor

between three and four years, this difference occasioned his removal from office; and then disclosures were made which, it cannot be denied, served to cast some shade over a portion at least of his official conduct. The circumstances attending this passage in Lord Camden's life are extremely instructive, as throwing light upon the principles of the times, and in this view they deserve to be more closely considered.

When upon the assembling of parliament in January, 1770, Lord Chatham moved an amendment, pledging the Lords, with all convenient speed, to take into consideration the causes of the prevailing discontents, and particularly the proceedings of the Commons touching Wilkes's election, and closed his remarkable reply by affirming that "where the law ends the tyranny begins," Lord Camden rose and declared, with a warmth unusual to him, that he had accepted the Great Seal without condition, and meant not to be trammelled by the king (then correcting his expression) —by his ministers; but he added, "I have suffered myself to be so too long. I have beheld, with silent indignation, the arbitrary measures of the minister. I have long drooped and held down my head in council, and disapproved with my looks those steps which I knew my avowed opposition could not prevent. I will do so no longer, but openly and boldly speak my sentiments." He then

supported Lord Chatham's amendment; declared that, if as a judge he should pay any respect to the vote of the Commons, he should look upon himself as a traitor to his trust and an enemy to his country; accused the ministers of causing the existing discontents; and all but in terms, certainly by implication, charged them with having formed a conspiracy against the liberties of the people. The ministers whom he thus accused had, through all the time of their measures causing the discontents, and their conspiracy against public liberty, been his colleagues, and still were his colleagues; for, strange to tell, he made this speech without having taken any step to resign the Great Seal. It is not to be wondered at that those colleagues should complain of such unexampled conduct, though they might have had themselves to thank for it; but it is singular that a month elapsed before their complaint could find a vent. On Lord Rockingham's motion for a Committee on the State of the Nation, at the beginning of February, Lord Sandwich charged the late Chancellor with duplicity in permitting the proceedings against Wilkes to proceed without remonstrance, and refusing to give any opinion respecting them. Lord Camden positively asserted, upon his honour, that he had informed the Duke of Grafton of his opinion, that those proceedings were both imprudent and illegal. The Duke admitted that he had once intimated,

but not in express terms, that he thought the measure impolitic or ill timed; but that he had never given his opinion on the vote of incapacity; —on the contrary, that whenever the subject was agitated in the cabinet he had remained silent, or retired; and Lord Weymouth confirmed the Duke's statement, adverting to one particular occasion upon which, on the bare mention of expulsion or incapacity, Lord Camden had withdrawn from the discussion. Lord Camden repeated his assertion, that he had always entertained a strong opinion against the proceedings, and had frequently expressed it; but he admitted that, finding his opinions rejected or despised, he had absented himself from a cabinet where his presence could only distract his colleagues from a course already resolved on, and which his single voice could not prevent them from pursuing. Lord Chatham asserted, that Lord Camden had frequently made the same statement to him, supporting it by cogent reasons.

Upon this very extraordinary passage various remarks arise. But first of all it is natural to observe upon the singular state of a government thus conducted. The administration of public affairs in a very critical emergency, or what in those comparatively quiet times was so regarded, appears to have been committed to men who had little or no confidence in each other; and the first minister, in point of rank, the chief law adviser

of the crown, the very head of the law, differed openly from all his colleagues upon the two great questions of the day, yet withheld his opposition to their measures, and even absented himself from their consultations as often as those matters were discussed. If anything could make this state of affairs more intolerable, and more inconsistent with the public good, it was the undoubted fact that the more pressing of the two questions, the proceeding respecting Wilkes, was entirely of a legal and constitutional nature, on which the Chancellor's opinion was the most indispensably required, and was a question intimately connected with, if not mainly arising out of, judicial proceedings over which the Chancellor had himself, while Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, presided.

The next remark which suggests itself is, that the cabinet had no great right to complain of the line taken by Lord Camden; for he plainly had given his colleagues to understand that he differed with them, and that on this account he withheld his opinion from them. They had a right to object; they were entitled to require his aid, and on his refusing it, to demand his resignation. They chose to retain him amongst them, and therefore they took him on his own terms. But the party which had a right to complain of Lord Camden had an equal right to complain of all his colleagues, and that party was the country. A cabinet

so constructed and so acting was wholly incapable of well administering the affairs of the nation, and it was the duty of his colleagues to require either his full co-operation or his retirement; and above all it was the duty of Lord Camden to relinquish his exalted station whenever he did not choose to perform its highest duties. To remain in office while he disapproved of the government's proceedings; to be responsible for measures on which he pronounced no opinion, but held an adverse one; to continue a nominal minister of the crown while the most important acts were doing in his name, which he believed must involve the country in a war with her colonies, and endanger also the peace of the empire at home—acts which he regarded as hostile to the principles of the constitution and subversive of the people's most sacred rights—was surely an offence of as high a nature as ever statesman committed. If it be said that he continued responsible for those measures, the answer is, that this rather aggravates than extenuates the charge; for he was responsible only because he in truth joined to execute them. Instead of opposing them, as was his bounden duty, he aided in giving them effect.

It is impossible to contemplate this subject without once more being struck with the very low point at which political virtue in those times was pitched. The most constitutional judge who had

up to that time ever sat upon the bench, one of the purest politicians that had ever appeared, is found to have persevered in a course of official conduct which all men in our day would regard as an enormous delinquency. Instead of his becoming the object of universal reprobation, the only censure called down upon him by the disclosure was a single attack in one debate, in which the great leader of the high constitutional party warmly defended him, and his supporters joined with their applause. The spirit of party no doubt greatly contributed to this result; the joy of the opposition was buoyant over so great a shock as Lord Camden's opposition to his colleagues gave the ministry; and accordingly we find Lord Shelburne expressing a hope, that "the Great Seal would go a begging, and that no one would be found base and mean-spirited enough to accept it upon such conditions as might gratify the ministers, as soon as the present worthy Chancellor should be dismissed;" for it is none of the least strange parts of the transaction, though apparently a thing not unusual in those times, that the Chancellor's opposition to the government was offered while he remained in office; he was not dismissed till a week after he had avowed his difference with his colleagues, and charged them by implication with a conspiracy against public liberty.

Nevertheless, it must be observed, that the lower

tone of political morality and the prevalence of faction will not wholly account for the singular circumstances which we have been considering. The exclusion of the public from a view of all that passed in parliament must be taken into the account.* If instead of an occasional and surreptitious glance at the debates of their representatives and of the peers, the people had daily read a full account of these proceedings, and if the conduct of public men had been constantly subjected to the scrutiny of the nation through the press, it can nowise be doubted that the extraordinary disclosures made upon Lord Camden's quitting office would have excited universal indignation. It can as little be questioned that, had he and his colleagues been always acting under the vigilant eye of the nation at large, and accountable to it as well as to their party-adherents and party-adversaries—the men equally engaged in playing against each other the game of faction, regardless of the country—no such state of things could have existed in the cabinet as we have been contemplating, and no man could have ventured to hold

* It is hardly to be believed that as late as 1770 the *Annual Register* should not venture to do more than indistinctly and without names hint at any part of the proceedings which we have been describing. Lord Camden's statement, and Lord Sandwich's accusation of him, are not even alluded to. The Sovereign is only mentioned by the letter K., Parliament by P., and the House of Commons by H. of C.

such a course as we have seen Lord Camden, safe and uncensured, pursued.

Finally, we may draw from these particulars in his history, an inference suggested also by the Diaries recently published of his two predecessors, Lord King and Lord Cowper, that the importance of the Chancellor in former times was far inferior to that which this high functionary now enjoys. A mere lawyer may now, as formerly, hold the great seal, and may now, as then, have little of the weight which he ought, for the safety of the cabinet and the good of the country, to possess. But if any one, of statesmanlike accomplishments, is now raised to that high office, or even any one who, like Lord Eldon, had previously never given his mind to state affairs, yet possessed a capacity for bearing a part in their direction, the influence which he must enjoy knows hardly any bounds but those which his own inclination or the jealousy of his colleagues may prescribe. It was not so a century ago,—perhaps, with the exception of Lord Hardwicke, it was not so before the time of Lord Loughborough. We find Lord King speaking of Sir Robert Walpole's consulting him, and so far confiding in him as to inform him of important matters in agitation, with a complacency which plainly shows that he was very far from considering such treatment a matter of course, as with any Chancellor whatever it would assuredly be in our

times. In like manner we can have no doubt, that had the office been regarded in the same light at George the Third's accession as it was in the latter part of his reign, so eminent a person as Lord Camden when holding it, a person as well known in the political as in the legal world, and, from his former conduct, next to Lord Chatham, the peculiar favourite of the English people, could never have acted the part he did on the greatest questions of the day, or been the silent, unsupported, and impotent disapprover of the course held by his colleagues on those great questions.*

When he had once openly taken his part, there was no faltering or hesitation in his future course. During the whole of the proceedings, both before and after the American war broke out, he appeared the steady and powerful champion of the sound

* It is fit to add, however, that on his retirement some important resignations took place. The Dukes of Beaufort and Manchester, Lords Granby, Huntingdon, and Coventry resigned their household places. James Grenville gave up the office of Vice-Treasurer of Ireland, and Dunning that of Solicitor-General in this country. The Great Seal, taken from Lord Camden (for, possibly with a view to embarrass the government, he did not resign), was pressed by the King on Charles Yorke, and reluctantly accepted 17th January; he died suddenly on the 20th, as is supposed by his own hand, and as the Duke of Grafton's papers prove; and Lord Mansfield and Sir Eardley Wilmot (Chief Justice of the Common Pleas) having both refused the Great Seal, it was put in commission for a year, when Mr. Justice Bathurst at length accepted it.

opinions which were natural to his feelings and his habits of thinking. Nor did any childish fear of lowering the dignity of an Ex-chancellor, much less any mean hankering after royal favour, prevent him from bearing his part in the parliamentary struggle which for twelve years was maintained against the court. He was upon every occasion, as it were, the right arm of Lord Chatham; and many of his speeches, even in the meagre reports of the times, impress us with a high idea of his eloquence and of his powers as a debater. His constitutional opinions had, while in the House of Commons, sometimes been pushed to the very verge of moderation even while Attorney-General. Take an example:—In the debate on American taxation, in 1766, there was a threat of proceeding against the printer of a report containing his speech, which George Grenville complained of as a breach of privilege. "I will maintain it to my latest hour; taxation and representation are inseparable. This position is founded on the laws of nature; it is more; it is itself an eternal law of nature; for whatever is a man's own is absolutely his own; no man has a right to take it from him without his consent, either expressed by himself or his representative. Whoever attempts to do it attempts an injury; whoever does it commits a robbery; he throws down and destroys the distinction between liberty and slavery." Here again is his doctrine of parlia-

mentary representation:—"To fix the era when the Commons began is perilous and destructive; to fix it in Edward's or Henry's reign is owing to the idle dreams of some whimsical, ill-judging antiquaries; but this is a point too important to be left to such wrong-headed people. When did the House of Commons begin? When, my Lords? It began with the constitution. There is not a blade of grass growing in the most obscure corner of this kingdom which is not, which was not ever, represented since the constitution began. There is not a blade of grass which when taxed was not taxed by consent of the proprietor."

It may easily be imagined that he was no sooner freed from the trammels of office than a spirit so congenial to that which animated Lord Chatham would burst forth. He accordingly joined him in denouncing as a violent outrage on the constitution the vote of the Commons incapacitating Wilkes from sitting in parliament, because he had been expelled after his election. This celebrated vote, the soundness of which Charles Fox, such is the force of early prejudices, maintained to his dying day, appears to have staggered even Lord Mansfield, who, when Lord Chatham moved an address to the Lords, declaring it unconstitutional, seemed through almost his whole speech to be arguing against it and in favour of the motion. He said, that he should regard himself as the greatest of

tyrants and of traitors were he to be moved by it in his judicial capacity, though he added, mysteriously, "that he had never given his opinion upon it, and should probably carry it with him to the grave. But he considered that if the Commons had passed an unjustifiable resolution, it was a matter between God and their own consciences; and that the Lords could not carry up in an address a railing accusation to the throne, thereby exciting a flame between the two Houses, not easily allayed." Lord Chatham and Lord Camden held that, all the arguments of Lord Mansfield being in favour of their amendment, his vote should have accompanied his speech; and Lord Camden was so much impregnated with his illustrious friend's sentiments, that though he would not quite go so far as to exclaim, "Let discord reign for ever," he yet declared "that to the voice of the people he would join his feeble efforts, and the louder he heard them cry, the better should he be pleased."

After Lord Chatham's death, in 1778, rather from loss of his great leader than from any infirmity of increasing age, he rarely took a part in debate. That the latter was not the cause of his inaction, we may well suppose from the great excellence of the speeches which he occasionally delivered. One of these must have possessed extraordinary merit, that on Lord Shelburne's amendment to the address, 27th of November, 1781; for it extorted from the

most niggardly dispenser of praise perhaps the only panegyric of which he was ever guilty. Lord Thurlow said, "he never had heard a more able discourse within these walls; that the premises were distinct and clear, while the deductions followed without constraint or false colouring." "In thus speaking of the noble Lord's very great abilities," said the eminently dyslogistic Chancellor, "I trust he will receive it as my real sentiments, not being at any time much disposed to travel out of the business before the House for the purpose of keeping up the trivial forms of debate, much less to pay particular personal compliments to any man."

When the disasters of the American war, more than the attacks of the opposition, had driven Lord North from the helm, Lord Camden became President of the Council in the Rockingham Administration, and quitted that office when the Coalition ministry was formed next year, having consistently remained in the cabinet of Lord Shelburne and Mr. Pitt, when the personal and factious violence of the Whigs led them to oppose the peace, and finally to overthrow the ministry that made it, by a Coalition which ruined the Whig character and influence for nearly a quarter of a century. Upon Mr. Pitt triumphantly defeating the Coalition, Lord Camden resumed his office, and kept it to his death.

Between the close of the American war and the regency in 1788, with the exception of delivering an admirable speech against Mr. Fox's India Bill, and one or two others during the same struggles, he spoke but seldom. But on the King's illness being declared to Parliament, he took the lead in all the proceedings connected with that event, Lord Thurlow being evidently little trusted by Mr. Pitt, who had discovered his intrigues with the opposition and Carlton House. Lord Camden in particular argued, and with great learning and ability, the constitutional questions which arose from time to time during the fierce controversy of that day, and he was perhaps never heard to greater advantage than in the debate on the Heir-Apparent's right, and Mr. Fox's incautious assertion of it, a doctrine which met with its most formidable adversary in the veteran champion of our popular constitution. Nor must it be forgotten that he had now reached his 75th year.

It does not appear that the lapse of four years more had either impaired his faculties or extinguished his love of liberty: for he it was who,—a leading member of the Government, in the face of the unanimous opinion of all the Judges, supported as they were in the House itself by Lord Thurlow, Lord Kenyon, and Lord Bathurst,—maintained the rights of juries in libel cases by the law of England, and carried through, in spite of a most for-

midable opposition from those law lords, the celebrated measure of Lord Erskine, which is commonly, though erroneously, called Mr. Fox's Libel Act.

Nothing can be more refreshing to the lovers of liberty, or more gratifying to those who venerate the judicial character, than to contemplate the glorious struggle for his long-cherished principles with which Lord Camden's illustrious life closed. The fire of his youth seemed to kindle in the bosom of one touching on fourscore, as he was impelled to destroy the servile and inconsistent doctrines of others, slaves to mere technical lore, but void of the sound and discriminating judgment which mainly constitutes a legal, and above all a judicial, mind. On such passages as follow, the mind fondly and reverently dwells, thankful that the pedantry of the profession had not been able to ruin so fine an understanding, or freeze so genial a current of feeling,—and hopeful that future lawyers and future judges may emulate the glory and the virtue of this great man.

"It should be imprinted," he said, "on every juror's mind that, if a jury find a verdict of publishing, and leave the criminality to the judge, they would have to answer to God and their consciences for the punishment which by such judge may be inflicted,—be it fine, imprisonment, loss of ears, whipping, or any other disgrace."—"I will affirm,"

added Lord Camden, "that they have the right of deciding, and that there is no power by the law of this country to prevent them from the exercise of the right if they think fit to maintain it. When they are pleased to acquit any defendant, their acquittal will stand good until the law of England shall be changed." "Give, my Lords," he exclaimed, "give to the jury or to the judge the right of trial. You must give it to one or to the other, and I think you can have no difficulty which to prefer. Place the press under the power of the jury, where it ought to be."

On a future stage of the bill, 16th May, 1792, he began a most able and energetic address to the House in terms which deeply moved all his hearers —because, he said, how unlikely it was that he should ever address them any more. After laying down the law as he conceived it certainly to be, he added, "So clear am I of this, that if it were not the law, it should be made so; for in all the catalogue of crimes there is not one so fit to be determined by a jury as libel." "With them leave it, and I have not a doubt that they will always be ready to protect the character of individuals against the pen of slander, and the government against the licentiousness of sedition."

The opinions of the judges were overruled, and the act was of purpose made declaratory and not enactive after the opposition of the law lords had

thus been defeated. The Chancellor, as the last effort to retain the law in judicial hands, asked if Lord Camden would object to a clause being inserted granting a new trial in case the court were dissatisfied with a verdict for the defendant?—"What," (exclaimed the veteran friend of freedom) "after a verdict of acquittal?" "Yes," said Lord Thurlow. "No, I thank you," was the memorable reply,—and the last words spoken in public by this great man. The bill immediately was passed.

Two years after, he descended to the grave full of years and honours, the most precious honours which a patriot can enjoy, the unabated gratitude of his countrymen, and the unbroken consciousness of having through good report and evil firmly maintained his principles and faithfully discharged his duty.

In the whole of Lord Camden's life there is no passage more remarkable or more edifying than his manly adherence to his own clear and well-considered opinion, in spite of the high professional authority by which it was impugned. There are many professional men who, after having long quitted the contentions of Westminster Hall, and been for a great portion of their lives removed from a close contact with their legal brethren, feel nervous at the idea of exposing themselves to be decried for ignorance or despised for heterodoxy, by the frowns of the legal community, adjusted to

the solemn authority and example of those set in place over them. It was the only mark of declining vigour which Lord Erskine betrayed, that in the course of the Queen's case he dreaded to come in conflict with the judges, even on some points which there is now no reason to doubt were wrongly decided, and which he accurately perceived at the time were erroneously determined.* At a more advanced age, Lord Camden retained the full vigour of his faculties, so as boldly to announce his deliberate opinion; and that it was in no degree biassed by any party leaning, or any hunting after popular applause, will appear manifest from the circumstance of the Libel Bill being passed by him in the manner we have just been contemplating during the most vehement period of the controversy upon sedition that began with the French Revolution, and in the same year in which the proclamation against seditious writings was issued, and the first prosecutions for libel instituted by the government of which Lord Camden was so conspicuous a member.†

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* For example of misdecision, take the rule laid down, that no question on cross-examination can be put to a witness, the answer to which may refer to a written document, without producing the document and placing it in the witness's hands, whereby the test applied whether to his veracity or to his memory is defeated.

† It is very gratifying to me that I can mention so valuable a step towards improvement in the law of slander and libel as my learned and esteemed friend Lord Campbell has re-

In close connexion with the most remarkable passages of Lord Camden's life, was the conduct and in general the history of Wilkes. We are thus led to speak somewhat of that unprincipled adventurer, not certainly as having any place among the Statesmen of the age, but as accidentally connected with their history.

The adventures of Wilkes are well known, and his general character is no longer any matter of controversy. Indeed, it is only justice towards him to remark, that there was so little about him of hypocrisy—the "homage due from vice to virtue" being by him paid as reluctantly and as sparingly as any of his other debts—that, even while in the

cently succeeded in carrying through Parliament, with the entire concurrence of the other law lords. The bill which I brought into the Commons twice, first in 1816 and again in 1830 on the eve of my quitting that house, embraced this and also other changes in the law, which I doubt not will now soon follow, and I most cheerfully resigned the subject into my colleague's hands. The measure was matured ably and judiciously under his auspices in a committee over which he presided; and in which, beside their report recommending the bill, a valuable body of evidence and opinions was collected. It must, however, be added, that a great loss to the reform of the law is incurred by leaving out the most valuable portion of my former Bills, that which protected political or public libel to the extent of allowing evidence of the truth. The Report of the Criminal Law Commissioners on this question, and on the whole subject, is elaborate and full of interest. Our attempt to extend the act has unfortunately failed, and the law of libel is thus left exceedingly imperfect.

height of his popularity, hardly any doubt hung over his real habits and dispositions. About liberty, for which he cared little, and would willingly have sacrificed less, he made a loud and blustering outcry, which was only his way of driving a trade: but to purity of private life, even to its decencies, he certainly made no pretence; and, during the time of the mob's idolatry of his name, there never existed any belief in his good character as a man, however much his partisans might be deceived in their notion that he was unlikely to sell them. He had received a good education—was a fair classical scholar—possessed the agreeable manners of polished society—married an heiress half as old again as himself—obliged her, by his licentious habits and profligate society, to live apart from him—made an attempt, when in want of money, to extort from her the annuity he had allowed for her support—is recorded in the Term Reports of the Court of King's Bench* to have been signally defeated in this nefarious scheme—continued to associate with gentlemen of fortune far above his own—passed part of his life as a militia colonel—and fell into the embarrassed circumstances which, naturally resulting from such habits, led in their turn to the violent political courses pursued by him in order to relieve his wants. Contempo-

* 1 Burr. 452. Easter, 31 Geo. II., Rex *v.* Mary Mead.

raneous, however, with the commencement of his loud-toned patriotism, and his virulent abuse of the Court, were his attempts to obtain promotion. One of these was his application to Lord Chatham for a seat at the Board of Trade. Soon after that failure, he was defeated in his designs upon the Embassy at Constantinople, which his zeal for the liberties of the English people, and his wish to promote them in the most effectual manner, induced him to desire; and a third time he was frustrated in an attempt to make head against the corruptions of the British Court, by repairing as governor to the remote province of Canada. Lord Bute and his party had some hand in these disappointments; and to running them down his zealous efforts were now directed.

With such a history, both in public and private, there was a slender chance of figuring to any good purpose as a patriot; but he took the chance of some of those lucky hits, those windfalls, which occasionally betide that trade, in the lucrative shape of ill-judged prosecution. He fared forth upon his voyage in the well-established line of Libel, and he made a more than usually successful venture; for he was not only prosecuted and convicted in the ordinary way, but a blundering Secretary of State issued, as we have seen, a general warrant to seize his papers—was of course resisted—allowed the matter to come into court—sustained an imme-

diate defeat—and was successfully sued for damages by the victorious party. Add to this, his imprisonment for a libel, with his repeated expulsions from the House of Commons, and his finally defeating that body, and compelling them to erase the resolution from their journals—and his merits were so great, that not even the awkward concomitant of another conviction for a grossly obscene book, printed clandestinely at a private press, could countervail his political virtues. He became the prime favourite of the mob, and was even admitted by more rational patriots to have deserved well of the constitution, from the courage and skill which he had shown in fighting two severe battles, and gaining for it two important victories. The promotion which he had in vain sought in the purlieus of Whitehall awaited him in the city; he became Alderman; he became Lord Mayor; and, having obtained the lucrative civic office of Chamberlain, which placed him for life in affluent circumstances, he retired, while in the prime of life, from a political warfare, of which he had accomplished all the purposes, by reaping its most valued fruits; passed the rest of his days in the support of the government; never raised his voice for reform, or for peace, or to mitigate the hostility of our court towards the country that had afforded him shelter in his banishment; nor ever quitted the standard of the ministry when it marshalled its followers to assaults

on the constitution, compared with which all that he had ever even invented against Lord Bute sank into mere insignificance.

That the folly of the government, concurring with the excited and sulky temper of the times, originally enabled Wilkes to drive so gainful a trade in patriotism, with so small a provision of the capital generally deemed necessary for embarking in it, there can be little doubt. In any ordinary circumstances, his speculation never could have succeeded. In most of the qualities required for it, he was exceedingly deficient. Though of good manners, and even of a winning address, his personal appearance was so revolting as to be hardly human. High birth he could not boast; for his father was a respectable distiller in Clerkenwell. Of fortune he had but a moderate share, and it was all spent before he became a candidate for popular favour; and his circumstances were so notoriously desperate, that he lived for years like a mendicant on patriotic subscriptions. Those more sterling qualities of strict moral conduct, regular religious habits, temperate and prudent behaviour, sober industrious life—qualities which are generally required of public men, even if more superficial accomplishments should be dispensed with—he had absolutely nothing of; and the most flagrant violations of decency on moral as well as religious matters were committed, were known, were be-

lieved, and were overlooked by the multitude, in the person of their favourite champion, who yet had the address to turn against one of his antagonists, a clerical gentleman, some of those feelings of the English people in behalf of decorum, all of which his own life was passed in openly outraging. Of the lighter but very important accomplishments which fill so prominent a place in the patriotic character, great eloquence, and a strong and masculine style in writing, he had but little. His compositions are more pointed than powerful; his wit shines far more than his passions glow; and as a speaker, when he did speak, which was but rarely, he showed indeed some address and much presence of mind, but no force, and produced hardly any effect. Horace Walpole constantly describes him as devoid of all power of speaking. Of his readiness, an anecdote is preserved which may be worth relating. Mr. Luttrell and he were standing on the Brentford hustings, when he asked his adversary privately, whether he thought there were more fools or rogues among the multitude of Wilkites spread out before them. "I 'll tell them what you say, and put an end to you," said the Colonel; but perceiving the threat gave Wilkes no alarm, he added, "Surely you don't mean to say you could stand here one hour after I did so?"—"Why," the answer was, "*you* would not be alive one instant after."—"How so?"—"I should

merely say it was a fabrication, and they would destroy you in the twinkling of an eye!"

If we are to judge of his speaking by the very few samples preserved of it, we should indeed form a very humble estimate of its merits. Constant declamation about rights, and liberties, and tyrants, and corruption, with hardly the merit of the most ordinary common-places on these hackneyed topics, seem to fill up its measure—with neither fact, nor argument, nor point, nor any thing at all happy or new in the handling of the threadbare material. But what it wanted in force it probably made up in fury; and, as calling names is an easy work to do, the enraged multitude as easily are pleased with what suits their excited feelings, gratifying the craving which excitement produces for more stimulus. That he failed, and signally failed, whenever he was called upon to address an audience which rejects such matter, is very certain.* In Parliament he was seldom or never heard after his own case had ceased to occupy the public attention; and nothing can be worse than his address to the Court of Common Pleas when he was discharged. The occasion, too, on which he failed was a great one, when a victory for constitutional principle had been gained perhaps by him—certainly in his per-

* "He has so little quickness, or talent for public speaking, that he would not be heard with patience."—(*Letters to Sir H. Mann*, ii. 22.)

son. All the people of London were hanging on the lips of their leader; yet nothing could be worse or feebler than his speech, of which the burden was a topic as much out of place as possible in a court of justice, where the strict letter of the law had alone prevailed, and that topic was verily handled with miserable inefficiency. "Liberty, my lords, liberty has been the object of my life! Liberty"—and so forth. He might about as well have sung a song, or lifted his hat and given three cheers.

In his writings, especially his dedication to Lord Bute of 'Roger Mortimer,' a tragedy, his notes on Warburton, and his ironical criticism on the Speaker's reprimand to the Printers, we trace much of that power of wit and of humour which he possessed to an extraordinary degree in private society. The last of these three pieces is by far the best, though he himself greatly preferred the first. It must be allowed, however, that neither is very original; and that both might easily enough have occurred to a diligent reader of Swift, Addison, Arbuthnot, and of Bolingbroke's dedication to Walpole, under the name of D'Anvers—a very superior production in all respects to the dedication of Roger Mortimer.

Of his convivial wit no doubt can remain. Gibbon, who passed an evening with him in 1762, when both were militia officers, says, "I scarcely

ever met with a better companion; he has inexhaustible spirits, infinite wit and humour, and a great deal of knowledge;" he adds, "a thorough profligate in principle as in practice; his life stained with every vice, and his conversation full of blasphemy and indecency; these morals he glories in; for shame is a weakness he has long since surmounted." This, no doubt, is greatly exaggerated, and the historian, believing him really to confess his political profligacy, is perhaps in error also,—"He told us that in this time of public dissension he was resolved to make his fortune." Possibly this was little more than a variety of his well-known saying to some one who was fawning on him with extreme doctrines—"I hope you don't take me for a Wilkite."

Of his wit and drollery some passages are preserved in society; but of these not many can with propriety be cited. We doubt if his retort to Lord Sandwich be of this description, when being asked, coarsely enough, "Whether he thought he should die by a halter or by a certain disease?" he quickly said, "That depends on whether I embrace your Lordship's principles or your mistress." We give this in order to contradict the French anecdote, which ascribes the *mot* to Mirabeau as a retort to Cardinal Maury, while sitting by him in the National Assembly. I heard it myself from the Duke of Norfolk, who was present when the

dialogue took place, many years before the French Revolution. His exclamation, powerfully humorous certainly, on Lord Thurlow's solemn hypocrisy in the House of Lords, is well known. When that consummate piece of cant was performed with all the solemnity which the actor's incredible air, eyebrows, voice, could lend the imprecation, "If I forget my sovereign, may my God forget me!"—Wilkes, seated on the steps of the throne, eyeing him askance with his inhuman squint and demoniac grin, muttered, "Forget you! He'll see you d——d first."

One quality remains to be added, but that a high one, and for a demagogue essential. He was a courageous man. Neither politically nor personally did he know what fear was. Into no risks for his party did he ever hesitate to rush. From no danger individually was he ever known to shrink. The meeting which he gave Secretary Martin, and which nearly cost him his life, was altogether unnecessary; he might easily have avoided it: and when a wild young Scotch officer, named Forbes, asked satisfaction for something said against his country, he met no refusal of his absurd demand; but was ordered on a distant service before he could repair to Flanders, whither Wilkes went to fight him, after the Mareschal's Court of France had interdicted a meeting in that country.

Some of the other honourable feelings which are usually found in company with bravery seem generally to have belonged to him. He was a man, apparently, of his word. In his necessities, though he submitted to eleemosynary aid for pecuniary supplies, and maltreated his wife to relieve his embarrassments, he yet had virtue enough to avoid the many disreputable expedients which have made the condition of the needy be compared to the impossibility of keeping an empty sack upright. His worst offence, and that which brings his honesty into greatest discredit, is certainly the playing a game in political virtue, or driving a commerce of patriotism, which the reader of his story is constantly struck with; and in no instance does this appear more plainly than in such attempts at pandering to the passions of the people, as his addressing a canting letter to the Lord Mayor, when he refused, as Sheriff of London, to attend the procession to St. Paul's on the occasion of the King's accession. He grounds his refusal on the preference he gives to "the real administration of justice, and his unwillingness to celebrate the accession of a prince under whose inauspicious reign the Constitution has been grossly and deliberately violated." That this was a measure to catch mob applause is proved by his sending a draft of his epistle to Junius for his opinion, and in his note, inclosing

the paper, he calls the proceeding a "manœuvre."* —(WOODFALL'S *Junius*, i. 324.)

I have dwelt longer upon this celebrated, rather let me say noted, person than may seem to be in proportion or keeping with a representation of the group in which he figures; because it is wholesome

* In admitting the polished manners of Wilkes, and that he had lived much in good society, somewhat in the best, it is unnecessary to admit that his turn of mind was not in some sort vulgar—witness his letters to Junius throughout—particularly the papers wherein he describes Junius's private communications to him as "*stirring up his spirits like a kiss from Chloe*," and asks the "great unknown" to accept of—what? Books? Valuable MSS.? Interesting information? No—but tickets to the Lord Mayor's dinner—crowded dinner—and the Lady Mayoress's far less tolerable ball, with a hint "to bring his Junia, if there be one."—WOODFALL, i. 325.

When, in 1817, I stated my strong opinion in the House of Commons on Wilkes's character, and the shame that his popularity brought on the people of England for a time, Mr. Wilberforce expressed his thanks to me, and confirmed my statements. Mr. Canning, however, observed that Wilkes was by no means a singular instance of demagogues not being respectable, and added,

"He 's Knight o' th' shire, and represents them all,"

which is an exaggerated view certainly. Sir Philip Francis, the morning after, remonstrated strongly with me, in the presence of other friends, for saying anything in disparagement of a man run down by the Court. He regarded the offence as greatly aggravated by the praise which had been given to Lord Mansfield, against whom he inveighed bitterly. The tone of his objurgation, so precisely that of Junius upon both subjects, was much remarked at the time.

to contemplate the nature, and reflect upon the fate, of one beyond all others of his day the idol of the mob, the popular favourite; one who, by the force of their applause, kept so far a footing with the better part of society as to be very little blamed, very cautiously abjured, by those most filled with disgust and with detestation of his practices. This is an addition to the chapter on the subject, already suggested by the French revolution. The men in Parliament, the members of the popular party, with perhaps the single exception of Lord Chatham, while they would have viewed with utter scorn any approaches he might make to their intimacy, nevertheless were too much afraid of losing the countenance of the multitude he ruled over to express their strongly entertained sentiments of his great demerits. They might not so far disgrace themselves as to truckle in their measures; they never certainly courted him by extending their patronage to himself or his accomplices; but they were under the powerful influence of intimidation, and were content to pass for his fellow-labourers in the Whig vineyard, and to suppress the feelings with which his conduct in public and private life filled them, rather than encounter his vengeance and risk the loss, the temporary loss, of mob applause. How base does such conduct now appear, and how noble is the contrast of Lord Chatham's manly deportment in the eyes of impartial posterity!

But the fall, the rapid and total declension, of Wilkes's fame—the utter oblivion into which his very name has passed for all purposes save the remembrance of his vices—the very ruins of his reputation no longer existing in our political history —this affords also a salutary lesson to the followers of the multitude,—those who may court the applause of the hour, and regulate their conduct towards the people, not by their own sound and conscientious opinions of what is right, but by the desire to gain fame in doing what is pleasing, and to avoid giving the displeasure that arises from telling wholesome though unpalatable truths. Never man more pandered to the appetites of the mob than Wilkes; never political pimp gave more uniform contentment to his employers. Having the moral and sturdy English, and not the voluble and versatile Irish, to deal with, he durst not do or say as he chose himself; but was compelled to follow that he might seem to lead; or at least to go two steps with his followers that he might get them to go three with him. He dared not deceive them grossly, clumsily, openly, impudently—dared not tell them opposite stories in the same breath—give them one advice to-day and the contrary to-morrow—pledge himself to a dozen things at one and the same time; then come before them with every one pledge unredeemed, and ask their voices, and ask their money too, on the credit of as many

more pledges tendered for the succeeding half year—all this with the obstinate and jealous people of England was out of the question; it could not have passed for six weeks. But he committed as great, if not as gross, frauds upon them; abused their confidence as entirely, if not so shamefully; catered for their depraved appetites in all the base dainties of sedition, and slander, and thoughtless violence, and unreasonable demands; instead of using his influence to guide their judgment, improve their taste, reclaim them from bad courses, and better their condition by providing for their instruction. The means by which he retained their attachment were disgraceful and vile. Like the hypocrite, his whole public life was a lie. The tribute which his unruly appetites kept him from paying to private morals, his dread of the mob, or his desire to use them for his selfish purposes, made him yield to public virtue; and he never appeared before the world without the mask of patriotic enthusiasm or democratic fury—he who in the recesses of Medmenham Abbey, and before many witnesses, gave the Eucharist to an ape, or prostituted the printing-press to multiply copies of a production that would dye with blushes the cheek of an impure.

It is the abuse, no doubt, of such popular courses, that we should reprobate. Popularity is far from being contemptible; it is often an honourable

acquisition; when duly earned, always a test of good done or evil resisted. But to be of a pure and genuine kind it must have one stamp—the security of one safe and certain die; it must be the popularity that follows good actions, not that which is run after. Nor can we do a greater service to the people themselves, or read a more wholesome lesson to the race, above all, of rising statesmen, than to mark how much the mock-patriot, the mob-seeker, the parasite of the giddy multitude, falls into the very worst faults for which popular men are wont the most loudly to condemn, and most heartily to despise, the courtly fawners upon princes. Flattery, indeed! obsequiousness! time-serving! What courtier of them all ever took more pains to soothe an irritable or to please a capricious prince than Wilkes to assuage the anger or gain the favour by humouring the prejudices of the mob? Falsehood, truly! intrigue! manœuvre! Where did ever titled suitor for promotion lay his plots more cunningly, or spread more wide his net, or plant more pensively in the fire those irons by which the waiters upon royal bounty forge to themselves and to their country chains, that they may also fashion the ladder they are to mount by, than the patriot of the city did to delude the multitude, whose slave he made himself, that he might be rewarded with their sweet voices, and so rise to wealth and to power? When

he penned the letter of cant about administering justice, rather than join in a procession to honour the accession of a prince whom in a private petition he covered over thick and threefold with the slime of his flattery, he called it himself a "manœuvre." When he delivered a rant about liberty before the reverend judges of the land—the speaking law of the land—he knew full well that he was not delighting those he addressed, but the mob out of doors, on whose ears the trash was to be echoed back. When he spoke a speech in Parliament of which no one heard a word, and said aside to a friend who urged the fruitlessness of the attempt at making the House listen—"Speak it I must, for it has been printed in the newspapers this half-hour"—he confessed that he was acting a false part in one place to compass a real object in another;—as thoroughly as ever minister did when he affected by smiles to be well in his prince's good graces before the multitude, all the while knowing that he was receiving a royal rebuke. When he and one confederate in the private room of a tavern issued a declaration, beginning, "We, the people of England," and signed "by order of the meeting," —he practised as gross a fraud upon that people as ever peer or parasite did, while affecting to pine for the prince's smiles, and to be devoted to his pleasure, in all the life they led consecrated to the furtherance of their own. It is no object of mine

to exalt courtly arts, or undervalue popular courses; no wish have I to over-estimate the claims of aristocracy at the cost of lowering the people. Both departments of our mixed social structure demand equally our regard; but let the claims of both be put on their proper footing. We may say, and very sincerely say, with Cicero—"Omnes boni semper nobilitati favemus, et quia utile est reipublicæ nobiles homines esse dignos majoribus suis; et quia valet, apud nos, clarorum hominum et bene de republica meritorum memoria, etiam mortuorum."* (*Pro Sext.*) These are the uses and these the merits of the aristocratic branch of our system; while the mean arts of the courtier only degrade the patrician character. But mean as they are, their vileness does not exceed that of the like arts practised towards the multitude; nor is the Sovereign Prince whose ear the flatterers essay to tickle that they may deceive him for their own purposes, more entirely injured by the deception which withholds the truth, than the Sovereign People is betrayed and undone by those who, for their own vile ends, pass their lives in suppressing wholesome truth and propagating popular delusion.

* All good men ever favour nobility, both because it is for the common weal that nobles should be worthy of their ancestors, and because we cherish the memory even after their death of great men who have deserved well of the country.

APPENDIX.

TRANSLATIONS.

Page 30.

There is a republic—there are no republicans.

Ibid.

We accomplished the 10th of August without you, and we are going to make the Republic in spite of you.

Page 31.

It is necessary to fright the Royalists! Terrify them!

Ibid.

To conquer, what is wanting? Audacity! still audacity! always audacity!—and France is saved.

Page 50.

And who has been telling you that a single innocent person has perished?

Page 53.

We must make an end of this. You see plainly enough that he conspires *deafly*.

Page 77.

In the first place, he had a perfect command of words.

Pages 77, 78.

President, I beg you would tell M. Dupont not to insult me if he would remain near me.

Page 78.

I do not believe that there exists in this Assembly a man *base* enough to bargain with the Court upon an article of our constitutional code—*perfidious* enough to propose making through the Court new changes which shame will not suffer themselves to propound—*enemy*

enough to the country to attempt discrediting the constitution because it restrains their ambition or their avarice —*impudent* enough to avow in the nation's eyes that they have not sought in the Revolution the means of their own elevation and aggrandizement; for I will not regard certain writings and certain speeches, that might bear this construction, as anything but the passing explosion of spite already expiated by repentance. No! at least we shall not be so stupid nor so indifferent as to let ourselves be made the eternal sport of intrigue, in order to overthrow, one after another, all the parts of our work at the pleasure of a few ambitious men.

Page 78.

I demand that every one of you swear that he never will consent to make a compromise with the executive power upon any article of the constitution, on pain of being declared a traitor to the nation.

Page 79.

"No! we must purge the army! we must——"

"Conclude, then."

"Yes! I am about to conclude—and against *you!*—against *you*, who, after the Revolution of the 10th of August, would fain have sent to the scaffold its authors —against *you* who have never ceased to plot the destruction of Paris—against *you* who would have saved the tyrant—against *you* who have conspired with Dumouriez—against *you* who have pursued with bitterness the same patriots whose heads Dumouriez demanded—against *you* whose criminal vengeance has provoked the same cries of indignation which you make a charge upon your victims! Well then, my conclusion is a decree of accusation against all Dumouriez's accomplices, and against all those denounced by the petitioners."

Page 81.

No! we have not been too severe! I call to witness (or, Bear witness) the Republic, which still breathes! I call to witness (or, Bear witness) the national represen-

tation surrounded with the respect due to the representatives of a great people. They speak of our vigour, and the country reproaches us with weakness.

Page 86.

It was a cause decided, but not tried.

Ibid.

Once more, President of Assassins, wilt thou hear me?

Page 98.

My name is Danton; my residence will soon be in annihilation; my name will live in the Pantheon of History.

Ibid.

Oh my well-beloved! must I quit thee?—Danton! no weakness! Lead on!

Page 110.

The companion of peace, the ally of ease, eloquence is the child of a government already well settled.

Page 113.

Hold your peace, killer of oxen!

Ibid.

Why, I have killed some that had more sense than thou.

Ibid.

Decree that he be put—

Decree that I am an ox, and thou mayest butcher me thyself.

Page 143.

In short, I am no longer able to speak, nor—nor to hold my tongue.

END OF VOL. V.

LONDON: WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, STAMFORD STREET.

HISTORICAL SKETCHES

OF

STATESMEN

WHO FLOURISHED IN

THE TIME OF GEORGE III.

THIRD SERIES.

VOLUME II.

BY

HENRY, LORD BROUGHAM, F.R.S.,

MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FRANCE, AND OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF NAPLES.

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EPNEY PU
LONDO

STATESMEN

OF THE

TIME OF GEORGE III.

LORD ELLENBOROUGH.

It would not be easy to find a greater contrast between two individuals filling places of the same kind, than the great judge whose character we have been contemplating afforded to one of the most eminent that have flourished in later times, Lord Ellenborough. In some respects, indeed, he presented a contrast to all other judges; for he broke through most of the conventional trammels which those high functionaries generally impose upon themselves, or fancy that others expect to behold. Far from abounding in that cautious circumspection, that close adherence to technical proprieties, that restraint of his mind to the mere matter in hand, he despised even much of what goes to form ordinary discretion; and is so much overrated by inferior natures as the essence of wisdom, but so justly valued by calculating ones

as the guarantee of success. Of compromise, whether regarding his opinions or his wishes, he knew not the meaning; of fear, in any of its various and extensive provinces, he knew not even the name; or, if he saw its form, yet he denied its title, held its style in mockery, and would not, even for an instant, acknowledge its sway. Far, indeed, from cradling himself within the details of a subject, he was wholly averse to such narrow views of particulars; and took a large and commanding survey of the whole, which laid open before him all its parts and all their relations. Bred a pleader, he, however, on coming to the bar, early showed that he only retained the needful technical knowledge which this preparatory practice had bestowed on him; and he at once dashed into the leading branch of the profession. The famous case of Mr. Hastings—the opprobrium of English justice, and, through mismanagement and party violence, the destruction of the greatest remedy afforded by our constitution—soon opened to Mr. Law the highest walks of the bar. He was the defendant's leading counsel; and his talents, both as a lawyer and a speaker, shone forth conspicuous even upon that great occasion of oratorical display —the only fruits produced by this proceeding, so costly to the country, so much more costly still to the free constitution of England. He soon rose to the unrivalled lead of the Northern Circuit, to

which, by birth, he belonged; his father having been Bishop of Carlisle, and himself born at the village of Salkeld,* in Cumberland. In Westminster Hall he had also good success, though he never rose there into the first lead; having indeed to contend with most able rivals, and among them with Erskine, the greatest advocate of all. Lord Kenyon, whose favour for this illustrious ornament of his court I have already had occasion to remark, was felt, or was supposed by Mr. Law, to be partial more than became him to this formidable antagonist; and a quotation to which this feeling gave rise is often cited, and with justice, as singularly happy. Mr. Erskine had been, somewhat more than was his practice with any adversary, triumphing over him, when Mr. Law, first addressing him and then Lord Kenyon, thundered forth these fine, and expressive, and perfectly applicable lines, with the volume of tone which he possessed beyond most men—

—Non me tua fervida terrent
Dicta ferox; Di me terrent et Jupiter hostis.

Here he bowed sarcastically to the Chief Justice, while he dwelt and paused upon the name of the heavenly archetype.

* This village is now remarkable as the residence of Mr. Gaskin, a man of the most sterling merit as an astronomer and maker of exquisite telescopes; father of Dr. Gaskin, late tutor of Jesus College, Cambridge, so well known for his mathematical accomplishments.

As a lawyer, without being very profound, and confining his learning to the ordinary matters of common law, he yet knew quite enough for ordinary occasions; and afterwards, as generally happens with able men, greatly extended his information when raised to the bench. As an advocate he was vigorous, impressive, adventurous; more daring than skilful; often, from his boldness, not a safe leader; always despising the slow progress, the indirect avenues to victory, which the rules of art prescribe;—always preferring to vault over obstacles, follow the shortest line, and cut the knot rather than waste time in untying it. But he could powerfully address the feelings, whether to rouse indignation at cruelty, or contempt at fraud, or scorn at meanness. For his own nature had nothing harsh in it, except his irascible temper, quickly roused, as quickly appeased; his mind was just, abhorring any deviation from equity; his nature was noble, holding in utter contempt everything low or base; his spirit was open, manly, honest, and ever moved with disgust at anything false or tricky; his courage was high, leaving him more scorn than compassion for nerves less firm than his own. Nor was it only the thunder of his fierce declamation—very effectual, though somewhat clumsy, and occasionally coarse—with which he could prevail against an adversary, and master an audience. He had no mean power of ridicule,

as playful as a mind more strong than refined could make it; while of sarcasm he was an eminent professor, but of the kind which hacks, and tears, and flays its victims, rather than destroys by cutting keenly. His vigorous understanding, holding no fellowship with anything that was petty or paltry, naturally saw the contemptible or inconsistent, and therefore, in this wise, ludicrous aspect of things; nor did he apply any restraint on this propensity of his nature when he came into stations where it could less freely be indulged. His interrogative exclamation in Lord Melville's case, when the party's ignorance of having taken accommodation out of the public fund was alleged—indeed, was proved—may be remembered as very picturesque, though perhaps more pungent than dignified. "Not know money? Did he see it when it glittered? Did he hear it when it chinked?" On the bench he had the very well known, but not very eloquent Henry Hunt before him, who, in mitigation of an expected sentence, spoke of some who "complained of his dangerous eloquence."—"They do you great injustice, sir," said the considerate and merciful Chief Justice, kindly wanting to relieve him from all anxiety on this charge. After he had been listening to two conveyancers for a whole day of a long and most technical argument in silence, and with a wholesome fear of lengthening it by any interruption whatever, one

of them in reply to a remark from another judge said, "If it is the pleasure of your lordships that I should go into that matter"—"We, sir," said the Chief Justice, "have no pleasure in it any way." When a favourite special pleader was making an excursion, somewhat unexpected by his hearers, as unwonted in him, into a pathetic topic—"An't we, sir, rather getting now into the high sentimental latitudes?"

It was observed with some justice, that his periods occasionally, with his manner, reminded men of Johnson. When meeting the defence of an advocate for a libel on the Prince Regent, that it had been provoked by the gross, and fulsome, and silly flattery of some corrupt panegyrist—"What," said he, "an offence against the law of the land provoked by an offence against the laws of taste! How frail is the tenure by which men hold their reputation, if it may be worn down and compromised away between the mischievous flattery of fulsome praise and the open enmity of malignant abuse!" But it was observed with much less correctness that his sarcasms derived adventitious force from his Cumberland dialect. From his manner and voice, both powerful, both eminently characteristic, they assuredly did derive a considerable and a legitimate accession of effect. But his dialect was of little or no avail; indeed, except in the pronouncing of a few words, his solecisms were not

perceivable. It was a great mistake to suppose that such pronunciations as Marchant, Hartford, were provincial; they are old English, and came from a time when the spelling was as I have now written the words. He was of those, too, who said "Lunnun" and "Brummagem;" but this, too, is the good old English dialect, and was always used by Mr. Perceval, who never crossed the Trent except twice a year going the Midland Circuit. Mr. Fox, a lover of the Saxon dialect, in like manner, always so spoke; and preferred Cales, and Sheer, and Groyne, to Cadiz, Shire, and Corunna.

When his powerful mind was brought to bear upon any question that came before him, whether sitting alone at *Nisi Prius*, or with his brethren in Banc, the impression which he made upon it was immediate, sure, and deep. Sometimes it required the modification of the whole court revising what he had done alone; sometimes the interposition of his fellows sitting with him; but its value was always great, and no man doubted the energy or could avoid feeling the weight of his blows.

The Books are perhaps not the only quarters whither we should resort to find the memorials of a Chief Judge's learning or talents for transacting judicial business. All that relates to sittings and circuits—that is, nearly two-thirds of his judicial

labours, and by far the most important portion of them—leaves no trace whatever in these valuable Repertories of legal learning. Yet the Term Reports bear ample testimony to the vigour of this eminent individual's capacity, during the eighteen years that he filled the first place among the English Common Law judges.

His manner has been already mentioned in one particular. It was much more faulty in another. He was somewhat irascible, and occasionally even violent. But no one could accuse him of the least partiality; his honest and manly nature ever disdained as much to trample overbearingly on the humble, as to crouch meanly before the powerful. He was sometimes impatient; and, as his mind was rather strong than nimble, he often betrayed hastiness of conclusion more than he displayed quickness of apprehension. This slowness was shown by his actually writing his speeches for many years after he was a leader; and, to the end of his professional life, he would occasionally commit to paper portions even of his intended reply to the Jury. It was a consequence of this power of his understanding, and of his uniform preference of the plain, sound, common-sense views which vigorous minds prefer, that refinements or subtleties were almost as little to his liking, as to the taste of his more cold and cautious successor. But he was not so much disturbed with them. They gave him little vexation,

but rather contributed to his mirth, or furnished food for his sarcastic commentary. "It was reserved," said he, respecting a somewhat refined and quite a new gloss of Mr. Scarlett upon a well-known matter—"It was reserved for the ingenuity of the fiftieth of Geo. III. [he was speaking in the year 1810] to hit upon this crotchet."

To give any samples of this eminent person's eloquence when at the bar would not be very easy, because in his time the practice had not been introduced of publishing corrected reports of ordinary trials; and till the speeches of Mr. Curran and Lord Erskine were collected in very recent times, no such works had ever been given to the public, at least in this country. But I have been so fortunate as to obtain the short-hand writer's notes of Mr. Law's celebrated Defence of Hastings; and a careful perusal of it has fully satisfied me that its merits fully answer its reputation, and that his great forensic powers have not been overrated by the general opinion of Westminster Hall. There is a lucid order in the statement of his details, struggling as he did with the vast compass and repulsive materials of his subject, and a plain, manly vigour in the argument, far more valuable to his cause than any rhetorical display. But there is also much of the purest and most effective eloquence. The topics and the illustrations are felicitously chosen; the occasional figures

are chastely but luminously introduced; the diction is pure and nervous, marked by the love of strong and homely phrase which ever breathed in his discourse; the finer passages have rarely been surpassed by any effort of forensic power, and must have produced a great effect under all the disadvantages of an exhausted auditory and a worn-out controversy, and would have ranked with the most successful exhibitions of the oratorical art had they been delivered in the early stage of the trial, before all had become, for the reasons so skilfully stated in the exordium, flat and lifeless. The following two passages will serve to justify my opinion. The first is a portion of the beautifully and skilfully elaborated exordium; the second is a part of the peroration, and may fairly be set in comparison with Mr. Burke's celebrated panegyric on Mr. Fox:—

"To a taste thus pampered, and I had almost said corrupted, with such luscious delicacies, we have nothing left that we can offer but the plain and simple food, I had almost said the dry husk, of fact and argument.

"But, my lords, we have, on another account, reason to anticipate the dissatisfaction and disgust of your lordships. Not only the manner in which this subject will be treated must be more homely than that to which you have been hitherto accustomed, but the subject itself and every attendant

circumstance has lost the attractive grace and keen relish of novelty. This solemn scene, the concentrated splendour of everything that is dignified and illustrious in the various orders of this well-compacted community,—the dazzling display of the envied and valuable distinctions with which the wisdom of our country has at all times adorned high birth, eminent virtue, brilliant valour, profound learning,—everything, in short, which is precious and sacred in the display of the supreme administration of British justice,—has, by the frequency of its exhibition, lost much of that claim to eager attention and warm interest which it once advanced, much of that favour which it lent to the first efforts of those whose great faculties little needed such adventitious aid to arrest the attention of the world.

"My lords, the province which our duty assigns us is, on other accounts, equally irksome and disadvantageous. To detect brilliant fallacies, to unveil specious errors, is at all times a thankless, obnoxious, and uninteresting office. To dispel the clouds of misrepresentation which have been for so many years gathering over the public life and conduct of the gentleman at your bar within that contracted portion of time which the public patience, and, what at our hands is equally deserving of consideration, the tortured and almost expiring patience of our client, will allow us, is

hardly within the compass of the same talents which have imposed this burden on us, but beyond the reach of all reasonable hope with those meaner faculties on which this Herculean labour rests. Struggling, therefore, against so many natural and so many artificial difficulties, enhanced by the inevitable effect at once of anticipation and of fatigue, where can the advocate look for comfort, or from whence derive any reasonable source of hope?"

The following is taken from the peroration:—

"My lords, I last of all present you with that praise which shall embalm his memory when he shall be no more, and whilst he lives shall enable him to look down with indifference and with scorn upon the most malignant efforts of his bitterest enemies. The people of India in this respect well adopted the practice of the ancients in delaying their sacrifices to heroes till after sunset. They waited not only till the beams which had warmed and cherished them were withdrawn, but they waited till the object of their regard had well nigh set in dark clouds of disastrous night: they waited till it was told, to the grief and astonishment of their distant land, that the beneficent author of so much good to them was arraigned by his countrymen as the cause of their oppression, vexation, degradation, and disgrace. Roused by these sad tidings, the rude but grateful

being who had been called by Mr. Hastings from the hills and forests of Rajawaum to abandon the abode of savage life and to taste the comforts of civilized existence,—the pilgrim who had been protected in his annual visits to the hallowed shrine where his forefathers had worshipped,—the princes who had been raised up, established, and protected by his power,—the humble citizen to whom he had communicated the invaluable blessings of a regular administration of impartial and enlightened justice,—each as he was severally blessed, and each according to his several ritual, invoked the sacred object of his faith and fear in solemn attestation of his thankfulness for that beneficent administration which, under the providence of our common Father, had been the appointed means of drawing down so many blessings on their heads."

It is not possible to quit this subject without once more expressing the sense now generally entertained by all impartial men of the gross and cruel injustice which marked the whole conduct of this celebrated impeachment. A powerful party, powerful in the Commons, the accusers, as well as among the Peers, the judges, made the destruction of an eminent public servant, admitted on all hands to have conferred the greatest benefits on his country, and crowned with unvaried approval by his employers, the object of their utmost efforts, taking it up distinctly as a party question. It

would have been enough to stamp the proceeding with the character of foul injustice had only the accusers been bound together, excited and exasperated by this factious spirit; because the accuser who prefers criminal charges is bound to act with fairness and with candour towards the object of his attack, and to show that he is only actuated by a painful sense of public duty. But how much more foul a stain attaches to this mockery of British justice, when we find the judges themselves leagued on either side by the same factious propensities, so that each man's vote could as certainly be known before the close of the trial, nay before its commencement, as after he had solemnly laid his hand on his heart and pronounced judgment "upon his honour;" that the victim of these party manœuvres was kept in the suspense of a culprit upon his trial for seven years; that he was during that time the object of incessant vituperation, either from the party chiefs in the Commons, or the party managers before the Lords, or the party writers in the press, or the party spouters at public meetings, and more commonly from all at once, assaulting his devoted character; that all this invective was poured forth against him for many years before one word could be heard in his defence, while half a generation passed away under the horror of his name, which such proceedings were calculated to inspire; that his

fortune, his moderate fortune, should have been exhausted with his health, his spirits, his life, or whatever of these a long service under the eastern sun had left unscathed; and that finally, when men had forgotten all but the eloquence of his adversaries, and would not listen to another word on either side of the tedious question, he should in his old age be pronounced wholly guiltless and honourably acquitted, being ruined as if he had been condemned—these are the outrages upon all justice which this scandalous mockery of a trial presents! But it also exhibits another result of blind factious zeal and boundless personal vanity, not unalloyed with fanaticism. Owing to this proceeding it is that the appointed remedy for misgovernment in our constitution—the impeachment of public wrong-doers—has become so discredited, that it exists in little more than in the theory of the government; while, but for Lord Erskine's firm and judicious conduct of Lord Melville's case, it would hardly have been now mentioned even among the speculative possibilities of our political system.

The chief defect of Lord Ellenborough's judicial character, not unconnected with the hastiness of his temper, also bore some relation to the vigour of his understanding, which made him somewhat contemptuous of weaker men, and somewhat overweening in reliance upon himself. He was

not as patient and passive as a judge ought habitually to be. He was apt to overlook suggestions, which, though valuable, might be more feebly urged than suited his palate. He was fond of taking the case prematurely into his own hands. He despatched business with great celerity, and, for the most part, with success. But causes were not sifted before him with that closeness of scrutiny, and parties were not suffered to bring forward all they had to state with that fulness and freedom, which alone can prevent misdecision, and ensure the due administration of justice. There was a common saying in his time, which contrasts the Court of Chancery under Lord Eldon with the King's Bench under Lord Ellenborough—"the two sides of Westminster Hall," as the Equity and Law departments are technically called. The one was said to hear everything and decide nothing, the other to decide everything and hear nothing. But in Banc, where full time has been given for preparation, where the court never can be taken by surprise, where, moreover, the assistance of three puisne judges is ever at hand to remedy the chief's defects and control his impatience, this hasty disposition and warm temperament was comparatively harmless, and seldom produced mischievous effects to the suitor. At Nisi Prius it is far otherwise; for there a false step is easily made, and it may not be easily retraced. If the

judge's power have prevented a moderately experienced practitioner from taking an objection in due time, or from urging it with sufficient distinctness, his client may often be told that he is too late, when he seeks to be relieved against the consequences of this mishap. So when a verdict has been obtained against the justice of the case, and the judge, through the impatience of his nature, has not disapproved it, the injury is remediless, because a new trial will in most instances be refused, or if granted, can only be obtained on the payment of all costs. There can be no manner of doubt, I apprehend, that taking into the account the defect now mentioned, Lord Tenterden was upon the whole a better judge than his abler and more vigorous predecessor. But it is also clear that he did not as promptly despatch the business of the sittings before him.

The state, however, of the bar, and the distribution of business in Lord Ellenborough's time, made it much easier for him to give that despatch. Had he survived to later times, it may well be questioned if he could have proceeded with the same celerity which marked his reign. The suitors as well as the bar were no longer the same body, with whose interests and with whose advocacy he had to deal. In his time, the whole City business was in the hands of Gibbs, Garrow, and Park; with occasionally, as in the cases of the

Baltic risks, the intervention of Topping;* and it was a main object with them all to facilitate the despatch of business. This they effected by at once giving up all but the arguable points of law, on which they immediately took the judge's opinion; and the maintainable questions of fact, on which they went to the jury. Fifteen or twenty important causes were thus disposed of in a morning, more to the satisfaction of the court and the benefit of the counsel than to the contentment of the parties or their attorneys. It is true that no real loss was, in the vast majority of instances, sustained by any one through this kind of arrangement, while the time of the public was saved. But it is equally true that every now and then a slip was made and a benefit lost; and that nothing can guard against such accidents but the right course of thoroughly sifting each case, as if it were the only one in which

* The mention of this most honourable man, in connexion with those cases, recalls an incident so creditable to himself, and to the renowned profession to which he belonged, that it ought not to be passed over in silence. A general retainer of a thousand guineas was brought to him, to cover the Baltic cases then in progress. His answer was, that this indicated either a doubt of his doing his duty on the ordinary terms known in the profession (one guinea particular, and five guineas general retainer), or an expectation that he should, on being thus retained, do something beyond the line of his duty, and therefore he must decline it. His clerk then accepted of the usual sum of five guineas, and he led on those important cases for the defendants.

the advocate was retained, or which the judge had to try. Nor must it be forgotten, that the right decision of causes is only one, though certainly the most important, office of justice. Another, only second in importance to that, is the giving parties satisfaction,—such satisfaction as is enough for reasonable persons. Now, as every person is impressed with the idea that there is but one cause in the world, and that one his own, however unmindful of this the court and the counsel may be, discontent, heart-burnings, feelings of injustice suffered, desire of redress in other ways, and among these, oftentimes by means of other suits, is sure to be left in the train of Themis, when the pace she moves at is too rapid for ordinary eyes to follow, and breaks too rudely through the surrounding ties and feelings of interest. Hence, the despatch effected is frequently more apparent (or what Lord Bacon calls *affected*) than real; of which a remarkable example used to be afforded by Sir John Leach, whose swift decisions, without hearing, only produced appeals to the Great Seal. But in whatever way these opinions may be disposed of, one thing was certain;—the kind of arrangement which has been described as prevailing among the leaders in Lord Ellenborough's time could only be found practicable as long as the lead should be confined within a very few hands. When it was at all scattered, such a thing was altogether out of

the question; and in Lord Tenterden's time this distribution undeniably took place.

But another change was also consummated, which, under Lord Tenterden's predecessor, had only begun to operate, and it tended materially both to control the speed of the bench, to promote the interest of the suitor, and to improve the administration of justice. The bar no longer owned so entire a supremacy of the bench; the advocate was not any more placed at an immeasurable distance from the judge; there was not now that impassable gulf between them which formerly had yawned before the barrister's eye. I remember being told by a learned sergeant, that at the table of Sergeants'-inn, where the judges meet their brethren of the coif to dine, the etiquette was, in those days, never to say a word after the Chief Justice, nor ever to begin any topic of conversation; he was treated with fully more than the obsequious deference shown at court to the sovereign himself. Assuredly, the footing upon which judges and barristers have stood in recent times is as different as can well be conceived from that on which those high parties stood under Lord Ellenborough's administration of justice; and one consequence of the new regimen is the much greater fulness of discussion, with its attendant evil, no doubt, the much greater prolixity of counsel, and much slower progress of business.

In another particular Lord Ellenborough differed from his successor, and the diversity originated in the greater vigour of his faculties and his more entire confidence in himself. Lord Tenterden, never having been a leader at the bar, could not abide "the trick" of the profession, and no harm would have been done had he stopped here. But he seemed always to suppose that an address to a jury could be framed on the model of a special plea, or the counts in a declaration, only without the prolixity and repetition habitual with pleaders: and to forget that the surest way of bringing out the truth in any case is to let the conflicting feelings and interests of parties come into their natural collision. His impatience was thus very manifest; and had his nerves been in the same proportion firm as his dislike to declamation and illustration was strong, a struggle would have ensued, in which the eloquence of the bar would either have been extinguished, or have silenced and discomfited the Bench. In like manner, during the interlocutory discussions with the counsel, whether on motions in Banc, or on objections taken before him at *Nisi Prius*, he was uneasy, impatient, and indeed irascible, at nothing so much as at cases put by way of trying what the court had flung out. Being wholly void of imagination to supply cases in reply, and even without much quickness to sift the application of those put, he

often lost his temper, and always treated the topic as an offence. But it was chiefly in obstructing cross-examination, which he wholly undervalued, from his utter incapability of performing his part in it, that his pleader-like habits broke out. Had he been submitted to in this matter, cross-examination would have been only known as a matter of legal history. His constant course was to stop the counsel, by reminding him that the witness had already said so, or had already sworn the contrary, and this before the question was answered; to which it was natural, and indeed became usual, for the counsel to make answer, that this was the very reason why the question had been asked; the object being either to try the witness's memory, or to test his honesty.

Very far otherwise was Lord Ellenborough. He had long and ably led while an advocate, although he never attained the first rank in Westminster Hall, and only shone superior on the Great Circuit of the North. He had therefore a fellow-feeling with the leaders before him; and as for any dread of their address to the jury, or any jealousy of the jury's interference with his functions, or any squeamish notion of his own dignity suffering from the speech to the jury going on before him, or any disinclination to witness the utmost exertion of the advocate's eloquence or wit in speaking, or of his subtlety and

vehemence in cross-examination, there was no more risk of that than if he had not been present in the court. So when an objection was taken to evidence, he never attempted to escape from it by denying the materiality of the fact offered to be proved, or of the question attempted to be put. He at once gave his opinion, to which, and justly, he deemed the parties entitled. Beyond interfering to oppose a prolix and needless statement, or a wearisome and reiterative cross-examination, or a wandering from what he deemed the point in issue, he did not interfere; and the same liberty and even licence which he had himself enjoyed when dealing with witnesses, he freely allowed counsel to use in his presence.

While representing this contrast between the two Chief Justices, we must, in fairness to Lord Tenterden, bear in mind the somewhat anomalous position of a judge while presiding at *Nisi Prius*; a position, the annoyance of which so vigorous a personage as Lord Ellenborough had no occasion to heed, strong in his own resources, relying on his intrinsic qualities, seeking no support to his dignity from any adventitious circumstances, dreading no rival authority to lower it. But inferior men could not so easily bear that rivalry. The judge, indeed, presides over the whole proceedings; but the jury holds *divisum imperium;* and he sits there as the nominal chief while the

advocate is sometimes dealing with the witness as if no judge were present, and sometimes addressing the jury, careless whether the judge hears him or not, equally indifferent whether his lordship approves or disapproves what he says. Princes, it is said, cannot allow any one to address another in their awful presence; nay, the code of etiquette has embodied this feeling of sensitive royalty in a rule or maxim. The ruler of the court has as little love of a proceeding which, in the prefatory words, "May it please your lordship," seems to recognise his supremacy; but in the next breath leaves "his lordship" on the bench entirely out of view, as if he were reposing on his bed, or gathered to his fathers. Few judges, accordingly, are so considerate as to be patient of eloquence, whether in declamation or in witty illustration; few regard these flights otherwise than as in derogation from the respect which is their own especial due. To address passions which they are forbidden to feel—to contemplate topics that must be suited to any palate rather than theirs—to issue jokes by which they ought not to be moved, while all others are convulsed—seems incompatible with their station as the presiding power, or a violation of that respect which it ought to inspire. Lord Tenterden, more than most judges, appeared to feel this; and it was a feeling wholly founded in forgetfulness of the very nature of jury trial, as it was unworthy

of his solid sense and great sagacity. In the distribution of criminal justice the case is widely different. The anxiety necessarily attendant upon the judge's highly responsible office here leads him to court all help from the ingenuity of counsel. Before addressing the jury was allowed in cases of felony, the chances of collision were of course more limited; but even now nothing of the uneasy feeling to which I have been adverting has been found to take place since the recent change of the practice in criminal courts.

In his political opinions, Lord Ellenborough was originally, like the rest of his family, a moderate Whig. But he never mingled in the associations or proceedings of party; and held an independent course, with, however, considerable disinclination, at all times, to the policy and the person of Mr. Pitt. He joined Mr. Addington's Administration as Attorney-General, and came into Parliament, where he did not distinguish himself. Lord Kenyon's death soon after made way for him on the bench; and he was, at the same time, raised to the peerage. The quarrel between that administration and Mr. Pitt did not reconcile him to the minister; and against Lord Melville he entertained a strong personal as well as party prejudice, which broke out once and again during the proceedings on his impeachment. The accession of the Whigs to power in 1806 was accompanied by

their junction with Lord Sidmouth; and as he required to have a friend in the strangely mixed cabinet, the unfortunate choice was made of the first Criminal and Common Law Judge in the land, of whom to make a political partisan;—he whose high office it was to try political offences of every description, and among others the daily libels upon the government of himself and his colleagues. This error has ever been deemed one of the darkest pages of Whig history. Mr. Fox made a dexterous and ingenious defence, quoting a few special precedents against the most sound principles of the constitution; and, with a singular forgetfulness of the real case, defending an inroad on the pure administration of criminal justice by appeals to instances of Civilians and Chancery lawyers sitting in Parliament. But Lord Ellenborough's own son lately took occasion honestly to state that his father had told him, if it were to do over again, he should be no party to such a proceeding. He said this in the course of the discussion which I raised against making the Lord Chief Justice one of the Regency in the event of the next heir being beyond the seas on a demise of the crown. I may add, that, being asked by Mr. Fox my opinion of his argument the day after Mr. Stanhope's motion, the reception which he gave my strong expression of dissent left me the strong impression that he had fully felt the difficulties of his case, if not its weakness.

On the bench, it is not to be denied that Lord Ellenborough occasionally suffered the strength of his political feelings to break forth, and to influence the tone and temper of his observations. That he ever, upon any one occasion, knowingly deviated one hair's breadth from justice in the discharge of his office, is wholly untrue. The case which gave rise to the greatest comment, and even led to a senseless show of impeachment, was Lord Cochrane's; but I have the best reason to know that all who assisted at this trial were in truth convinced of the purity with which the judicial duties were discharged, and the equality with which justice was administered. Lord Ellenborough was not of those judges who, in directing the jury, merely read over their notes and let them guess at the opinions they have formed; leaving them without any help or recommendation to form their own judgments. Upon each case that came before him he had an opinion; and while he left the decision with the jury, he intimated how he thought himself. This manner of performing the office of judge is now generally followed and most commonly approved. It was the course taken by this great judge in trying Lord Cochrane and his alleged associates; but, if any of those who attacked him for it had been present at the trial of the case which stood immediately before it or after it in the paper, he would have found Lord Ellenborough trying

that case in the self-same way—it being an action upon a bill of exchange or for goods sold and delivered.

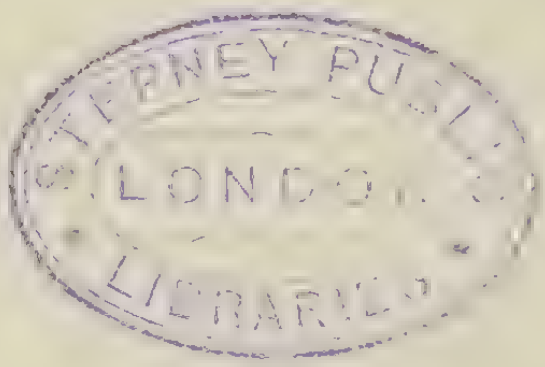
I must, however, be here distinctly understood to deny the accuracy of the opinion which Lord Ellenborough appears to have formed in this case, and deeply to lament the verdict of guilty which the jury returned, after three hours' consulting and hesitation. If Lord Cochrane was at all aware of his uncle, Mr. Cochrane Johnstone's, proceedings, it was the whole extent of his privity to the fact. Having been one of the counsel engaged in the cause, I can speak with some confidence respecting it, and I take upon me to assert that Lord Cochrane's conviction was mainly owing to the extreme repugnance which he felt to giving up his uncle, or taking those precautions for his own safety which would have operated against that near relation. Even when he, the real criminal, had confessed his guilt by taking to flight, and the other defendants were brought up for judgment, we, the counsel, could not persuade Lord Cochrane to shake himself loose from the contamination by abandoning him.

As regarded the Lord Chief Justice's conduct at the trial, none of us entertained any doubt that he had acted impartially, according to his conscience, and had tried it as he would have tried any other cause in which neither political nor personal feelings could have interfered. Our only complaint

was his Lordship's refusal to adjourn after the prosecutor's case closed, and his requiring us to enter upon our defence at so late an hour, past nine o'clock, that the adjournment took place at midnight, and before we called our witnesses. Of course I speak of the trial at Guildhall only. Lord Ellenborough was equally to blame with his brethren in the Court of King's Bench for that most cruel and unjustifiable sentence, which at once secured Lord Cochrane's re-election for Westminster when the Commons expelled him upon his conviction, and abolished for ever the punishment of the pillory, in all but one excepted case, perjury, in which also it has practically ceased to defile and disgrace our criminal jurisprudence.—"To cage a person of quality, or to set him in the pillory, upon account of any crime whatever (said Adam Smith, half a century before this case occurred), is a brutality of which no European government except that of Russia is capable."—(*Mor. Sent.*, p. 11, § 3.)

In 1833, the government of which I was a member restored this great warrior to his rank of admiral in our navy. The country, therefore, in the event of hostilities, would now have the inestimable benefit of his services, whom none perhaps ever equalled in heroic courage, and whose fertility of resources, military as well as naval, place him high among the very first of com-

manders. That his honours of knighthood so gloriously won should still be withholden is a stain not upon him, but upon the councils of his country; and after his restoration to the service, it is as inconsistent and incomprehensible as cruel and unjust.



LORD CHIEF JUSTICE BUSHE.

Although I had not the advantage of knowing this eminent person in his judicial capacity, yet I had the great pleasure of his acquaintance, and I also upon one remarkable occasion saw him examined as a witness upon matter partly of fact and partly of opinion; it was before the Irish committee of 1839. The testimony of a judge thus given bears a close resemblance to the opinion which he delivers in Court and the directions which he gives to a jury. Acting in both capacities under the obligation of his oath, and in pursuit of nothing but the truth, it becomes him to pronounce, with most scrupulous fairness, the opinions which he states, to relate with the utmost precision the facts which he knows, and to weigh nicely every word which he uses in conveying his statement. No one who heard the very remarkable examination of Chief Justice Bushe could avoid forming the most exalted estimate of his judicial talents. Many of the questions to which he necessarily addressed himself were involved in party

controversy, kindling on one side and the other great heats; yet never was a more calm or a more fair tone than that which he took and throughout preserved. Some of the points were of great nicety; but the discrimination with which he handled them was such as seemed to remove all difficulty, and dispel whatever obscurity clouded the subject. The choice of his words was most felicitous; it always seemed as if the form of expression was selected which was the most peculiarly adapted to convey the meaning, with perfect simplicity and without the least matter of exaggeration or of softening. The manner of speaking each sentence, too, betokened an anxiety to give the very truth, and the slowness oftentimes showed that each word was cautiously weighed. There was shed over the whole the grace of a delivery altogether singular for its combined suavity and dignity. All that one had heard of the wonderful fascination of his manner, both at the bar and upon the bench, became easily credible to those who heard his evidence.

If we followed him into the circle of private society, the gratification was exceedingly great. Nothing, indeed, could be more delightful; for his conversation made no effort, not the least attempt at display, and the few moments that he spoke at a time all persons wished to have been indefinitely prolonged. There was a conciseness and point in

his expressions which none who heard him could forget. The power of narrative which so greatly distinguished him at the bar was marvellously shown in his familiar conversation; but the shortness, the condensation, formed perhaps the feature that took most hold of the hearer's memory. They who passed one of his evenings with him during that visit to London will not easily forget an instance of this matchless faculty, and, at the hazard of doing it injustice, I must endeavour here to preserve it. He was describing a Gascon who had sent him wine, which was destroyed at the Custom House fire in Dublin, and he contrived to comprise in a few sentences, to all appearance naturally and without effort, his narrative of the proceeding, with two documents, and the point.—"He had sent me wine which was consumed in the Custom House fire, and he wrote to condole with me on the loss to the public, but especially of the wine, which, he said, he found was by law at the purchaser's risk. I answered, and offered as some consolation to him the assurance that by law it was at the risk of the seller."—Some members of the Northern Circuit then present were reminded of a celebrated story which the late Mr. Baron Wood used to be called upon to relate, in exemplification of the singular conciseness, and, I may add, felicity, of his diction.*

* It would be difficult to name any composition superior

But it is fit that we should turn to the merits of Chief Justice Bushe while in the earlier period of his life he filled a high station at the bar. His education had been classical, and he studied and practised the rhetorical art with great success in the Historical Society of Dublin University, an institution famous for having trained about the same time Lord Plunket to that almost unrivalled excellence which he early attained, and for having at a former period fostered and exercised the genius of Grattan, and Flood, and all the eminent Irish orators. The proficiency of Bushe may be estimated from the impression which Mr. Grattan confessed that the young man had made upon him. Having been present at one of the debates in the scene of his former studies, and heard Bushe speak, his remark was, "that he spoke with the lips of an angel." Accordingly, upon being called to the bar in 1790, he soon rose to extensive practice, and this he owed as much to his nice discretion, to the tact and the quickness which forms a *Nisi Prius* advocate's most important qualification, as to his powers of speaking. Of law he had a sufficient provision without any remarkable store of learning; nor did he ever either at the bar or on the bench excel in the black letter of the profession.

in this respect to the two Tracts of Mr. Baron Wood, on the Tithe Law and its defects. They were printed, but not published.

But his merit as a speaker was of the highest description. His power of narration has not, perhaps, been equalled. If any one would see this in its greatest perfection, he has only to read the inimitable speech on the Trimbleston cause: the narrative of Livy himself does not surpass that great effort. Perfect simplicity, but united with elegance; a lucid arrangement and unbroken connexion of all the facts; the constant introduction of the most picturesque expressions, but never as ornaments; these, the great qualities of narrative, accomplish its great end and purpose; they place the story and the scene before the hearer, or the reader, as if he witnessed the reality. It is unnecessary to add, that the temperate, and chaste, and even subdued tone of the whole is unvaried and unbroken; but such praise belongs to every part of this great speaker's oratory. Whether he declaims or argues, moves the feelings or resorts to ridicule and sarcasm, deals in persuasion or invective, he never is, for an instant, extravagant. We have not the condensed and vigorous demonstration of Plunket; we have not those marvellous figures, sparingly introduced, but whensoever used, of an application to the argument absolutely magical;* but we have an equal display of chas-

* Let no one hastily suppose that this is an exaggerated description of Lord Plunket's extraordinary eloquence. Where shall be found such figures as those which follow—

tened abstinence, of absolute freedom from all the vices of the Irish school, with, perhaps, a more winning grace of diction; and all who have witnessed it agree in ascribing the greatest power to a manner that none could resist. The utmost that partial criticism could do to find a fault was to praise the suavity of the orator at the expense of his force. John Kemble described him as "the greatest actor off the stage;" but he forgot that so great an actor must also have stood highest among his Thespian brethren had the scene been shifted.

In 1798 he came into Parliament. The great struggle of the Union was then beginning; he at

each raising a living image before the mind, yet each embodying not merely a principle, but the very argument in hand—each leaving that very argument literally translated into figure? The first relates to the Statutes of Limitation, or to prescriptive title:—"If Time destroys the evidence of title, the laws have wisely and humanely made length of possession a substitute for that which has been destroyed. He comes with his scythe in one hand to mow down the muniments of our rights; but in his other hand the lawgiver has placed an hour-glass, by which he metes out incessantly those portions of duration which render needless the evidence that he has swept away."

Explaining why he had now become a Reformer, when he had before opposed the question:—"Circumstances," said he, "are wholly changed; formerly Reform came to our door like a felon—a robber to be resisted. He now approaches like a creditor; you admit the justice of his demand, and only dispute the time and the instalments by which he shall be paid."

once flung himself into the ranks of its adversaries; and the most splendid speech to which that controversy gave rise, after Mr. Plunket's, was made by Mr. Bushe. On the measure being carried, he had serious thoughts of removing to England, for he considered Dublin as now become a provincial town. The difficulties into which his honourable conduct in undertaking to discharge the debts of his family had placed him, prevented, in all probability, the execution of this plan, and in the course of a few years he first became Solicitor-General under Mr. Plunket and Mr. Saurin successively, and afterwards, in Lord Wellesley's first vice-royalty, he succeeded Lord Downes as Chief Justice of the King's Bench. All parties allow that during the fierce political contests which filled the period of nineteen years during which he was a law-officer of the crown, he performed his duty with perfect honour towards the Government, but with the most undeviating humanity and toleration towards their opponents in church or state. Nor has the breath of calumny ever tarnished the purity of his judicial character during the twenty years that he presided on the bench. He was stern in his administration of the criminal law, but he was as rigidly impartial as he was severe. In one particular he was perfect, and it is of great importance in a judge; he knew no distinction of persons among those who practised before him, unless it

was to protect and encourage rising merit; for a young advocate was ever sure of his ear, even when the fastidiousness of veteran practitioners might disregard his efforts. This kindly disposition he carried with him from the bar, where he had been always remarkable for the courtesy with which he treated his juniors; indeed, it went further; it was a constant habit of protecting and encouraging them.

His oratorical excellence was plainly of a kind which might lead us to expect a similar success in written composition. Accordingly he stood very high among the writers of his day; so high that we may well lament his talents being bestowed upon subjects of an ephemeral interest. The work by which he is chiefly known as an author is the pamphlet on the Union, published in answer to the Castle manifesto, written by Mr. Under-Secretary Cooke. Mr. Bushe's tract is called '*Cease your funning*,' and it consists of a well-sustained ironical attack upon the Under-Secretary, whom it assumes to be an United Irishman, or other rebel, in disguise. The plan of such an irony is, for a long work, necessarily defective. It must needs degenerate occasionally into tameness; and it runs the risk every now and then of being taken for serious; as I well remember an ironical defence of the Slave Trade once upon a time so much failed of its object that some worthy abolitionists

were preparing an answer to it, when they were informed that the author was an ally in disguise. No such fate was likely to befall '*Cease your funning.*' It is, indeed, admirably executed; as successfully as a work on such a plan can be; and reminds the reader of the best of Dean Swift's political writings, being indeed every way worthy of his pen.

It would be impossible to give any specimens of this far-famed pamphlet; but there is another, the production of his earlier years, which appears to me possessed of the greatest merit; it is an answer to Paine's 'Rights of Man;' and it would be hard to say whether the sound and judicious reasoning, or the beautiful and chaste composition, most deserve our admiration. Mr. Bushe was only four-and-twenty when this work appeared, and it is no exaggeration to say that it deserves a place on the same level with Mr. Burke's celebrated 'Reflections.' To support such a panegyric, examples will be required; and I have no fear in appealing to such passages as the following, after premising that they differ in no respect from the rest of the work, which extends to above eighty pages.

"Any man who has studied the merits and enjoyed the blessings of the English constitution, cannot but be alarmed when the legislators of France ('these babes and sucklings in politics')*

* An expression of Paine's applied to others.

are held up in their cradle to the imitation of a country whose government adds the strength of maturity to the venerable aspect of age; a government which I trust will not be exchanged for a certain tumult in the first instance, and a doubtful reform in the second. I love liberty as much as Mr. Paine; but differ from him in my opinion of what it is—I pant not for the range of a desert, unbounded, barren, and savage; but prefer the limited enjoyments of cultivation, whose confines, while they restrain, protect us, and add to the quality more than they deduct from the quantity of my freedom; this I feel to be my birthright as a subject of Great Britain, and cannot but tremble for my happiness, when a projector recommends to level the wise and ancient land-marks, break down the fences, and disfigure the face of every inheritance. I have no wish to return to the desert in search of my natural rights. I consider myself to have exchanged them for the better, and am determined to stand by the bargain.

"These sentiments, my dear Sir, have tempted me to trouble you and the public with this book. The times are critical, and the feeblest exertion cannot be unwelcome, when a factory of sedition* is set up in the metropolis, and an assistant club

* An association had been formed in Dublin for the purpose of circulating Paine's book, at a low price, through the country.

sends an inflammatory pamphlet through the kingdom; when these state quacks, infecting their country at the heart, circulate, by fomenting applications, the poisons to the extremities, and reduce the price of the pestilence, lest the poverty of any creature should protect him from its contagion. The times are critical when such a book as Mr. Paine's appears, and the consequences would be fatal if its success were proportioned to the zeal of its author, or the assiduity of its propagators. It is a system of false metaphysics and bad politics. Any attempt to carry it into effect must be destructive of peace, and there is nothing practical in it but its mischief. It holds out inducements to disturbance on the promise of improvement, and softens the prospect of immediate disorder, in the cant of the empiric, '*You must be worse before you can be better.*' It excites men to what they ought not to do by informing them of what they can do, and preaches rights to promote wrongs.* It is a collection of unamiable speculations, equally subversive of good government, good thinking, and good feeling. It establishes a kind of republic in the mind; dethrones the majesty of sentiment; degrades the dignity of noble and elevated feelings; and substitutes a democracy of mean and vulgar calcula-

* An instrument was sold in France for less than half-a-crown, called "Droits de l'Homme." It concealed a cut-and-thrust sword, and looked like a common whip.

tion. In their usurpation, all the grace, and elegance, and order of the human heart is overturned, and the state of man,

'Like to a little kingdom, suffers
The nature of an insurrection'——"

The following passage is somewhat more ambitious and figurative, though not more terse and epigrammatic; and, though less severe, it cannot be justly charged with violating the canons of correct taste.

"If the institution of honours perfects and stimulates ambition, and that ambition looks beyond the grave, will not this perpetuation of the prize increase the emulation? Is there nothing to enhance our honour in the consideration that it is to be transmitted to the children of your affection, and that you are the ennobler of many? Is ambition fully gratified, or desert half rewarded by a distinction perishable as yourself, to be laid down ere it is well won, and to crumble into dust with your remains? Is the reward of merit to be intrusted to the ungrateful memory of mankind? Shall its reward be late and its enjoyment short? That deviation from strict justice is not very severe, and is certainly very politic, which indulges the manes of the father with the honours of the son, and forbids man, in the contemplation of his mortality, to look upon his inducements as insufficient, and his rewards as incomplete. The wreath of fame would not be

worth the wear if it was not evergreen; and the laurel is its emblem because it does not wither. In these considerations I discover a probable and a wise origin of hereditary dignities, as far as their institution regards the person upon whom they were first conferred: in regard to him the reward of merit was enlarged; in regard to others the encouragement to exertion was increased. But the wisdom of hereditary dignities does not rest here. There is a principle in the heart of man which any wise government will encourage, because it is the auxiliary of virtue,—I mean the principle of honour which, in those moments of weakness when conscience slumbers, watches over the deserted charge, and engages friends in the defence of integrity. It is a sanction of conduct which the imagination lends to virtue, is itself the reward, and inflicts shame as the punishment. The audacity of vice may despise fear; the sense of reason may be steeled; art may elude temporal, and impiety defy eternal, vengeance; but honour holds the scourge of shame, and he is hard indeed who trembles not under its lash. Even if the publicity of shame be avoided, its sanction is not destroyed. Every one suffers when ashamed of himself, and the blushes of the heart are agony. The dread of shame is the last good quality which forsakes the breast, and the principle of honour frequently retains it when every other instance of good conduct has abandoned the

heart. This sentiment must ever be in proportion to a man's opinions of what is expected from him; and in proportion as he is taught that much is expected from him, will it swell in his bosom and sharpen his sensibility. I cannot therefore discover a mere '*diminutive childishness*'* in the institution of hereditary dignities, if they cherish this sentiment, and if this sentiment cherishes virtue; and France has '*breeched herself*'† into manhood to little purpose of good government in putting down the delusion, if delusion it is. An establishment is something more than '*puerile*,'‡ which gives encouragement to virtue, dignity to worth, adds the idea of great to good, and makes that splendid which was useful. Society was made for man; and, as man is various, and frail, and vain, it does not disdain to promote his happiness by playing on his foibles; its strength is armed against his fears; his hopes are fed by its rewards; and its blandishments are directed to his vanities. Virtue, coldly entertained in any other corner of the heart, will take a strong hold in the pride of man. She has often erected her temple on the coronets of a glorious ancestry, and the world has been indebted to the manes of the dead for the merits of the living."

The reader of these fine passages is at once reminded of Mr. Burke, and the best of his writings on the French Revolution and the frame of society.

* Paine's expression. † Ib. ‡ Ib.

It is impossible to doubt that Mr. Bushe had deeply studied that great performance, and that he unavoidably, in treating the same subject, fell into a similarity of style, while he felt a common sentiment with that illustrious author. But there is nothing servile in the imitation, if imitation it be; and of the thousands who have endeavoured to tread the same path, no one but he has been successful. Indeed, it may well be affirmed that, successfully to imitate Mr. Burke, asks Mr. Burke's own genius; and woe betide the wight who, without his strength, ventures to put on his armour. Among the various anecdotes* that have been preserved of the Chief Justice, there is no record of Mr. Burke having been made acquainted with the masterly performance of his fellow-labourer. He who eagerly opened his arms to the able and brilliant, but very inferior

* In various periodical publications there have been accounts of Mr. Bushe at all times of his life. Some of these take him up as early as 1822, on his elevation to the bench; others come down to his retirement; and some have appeared since his death. I have, of course, consulted them all, as well as resorted to private sources of information. That upon some of them, at least, no reliance can safely be placed, is clear from the random way in which facts and dates are dealt with. What shall be said of the careful attention to this subject, of writers who make Lord Grenville's government be dismissed in 1803, and Mr. Bushe have been thirteen years at the bar when that dismissal happened; and who represent Mr. Sheridan as taking a part against the Coercion Bill in 1817, when he died in 1816, and had not been in Parliament since 1812?

coadjutor, whom he found in Professor Wylde, must have received with delight such an ally as the author of this admirable book. It clearly contains not merely the germ and rudiments of the extraordinary, and in some sort peculiar, eloquence for which its author was afterwards so remarkable, but, with a few occasional exceptions in point of severity, a few deviations from simplicity, pardonable on such a subject, it exhibits that very diction itself which distinguished him—chaste and pure, addressed continually to the subject in hand, instinct with epigram, sufficiently but soberly sprinkled with flowers, often sharpened with sarcasm, always akin to serious and wise reflection. When we reflect that this was the work of a very young man, the maturity and gravity of the style, as well as of the reasoning, becomes exceedingly striking: and it is interesting to observe the impression which a perusal of it left on the author's mind after an interval of many years. He possibly felt some of that mortification which Sir Joshua Reynolds and other great artists are known to have expressed upon remarking the excellence of their earlier efforts, and being sensible how little their pencil had afterwards improved. Be that as it may, the following note lies before me in the Chief Justice's hand, dated August, 1831, and it may appropriately close these commentaries.

"I have read over," says his Lordship, "a pamphlet which I wrote in 1791, when a very young

man, in my twenty-fifth year; and although my better, at least older, judgment and taste condemn some instances of hasty and erroneous opinions rashly hazarded, much superficial and inaccurate reasoning, and several puerilities and affectations of style, yet at the end of forty years, I abide by most of the principles which I then maintained, and consider the execution of the work, taken altogether, as better than anything of which I am now capable."

THOMAS JEFFERSON.

We have had occasion to note the extraordinary capacity and brilliant history of Washington and Franklin, next to whom undoubtedly among the great men that founded the American republic is to be mentioned Jefferson, although he follows them at a considerable distance. But without the extraordinary virtue of the one—because, indeed, he never passed through the same temptation—and without the singular genius of the other, his services to the great cause of human liberty were truly valuable; his life was steadily devoted to the maintenance of his principles; and he displayed both firmness and ability in the important scenes in which he performed a conspicuous part. At a time when there is an unaccountable disposition, even among the friends of liberty, to undervalue the institutions of the great Republic, to grudge her extraordinary success, and to take delight in foretelling her dismemberment and her downfall, it becomes a duty to commemorate the virtues of her founders, even if we should not in all particulars adopt their poli-

tical opinions, and if we should witness with pain some glaring imperfections in the frame or in the working of the polity which they established.

He was educated very carefully for the profession of the law, and had also the inestimable advantage of good classical and scientific instruction. He studied the mathematics under Dr. Small, a brother of the mathematician of that name, who acquired great fame among geometricians by his demonstrations of Dr. Matthew Stewart's celebrated Porisms. When Jefferson came to Virginia, his native state, he was soon distinguished among his brethren as a sound and accurate lawyer. His speaking was plain and business-like, aspiring to no higher praise. But during the eight years that he continued in the profession, his success was so great that he must, had he persevered, have risen to the foremost rank as a practitioner. It happened, however, that the disputes between the mother country and the colonies now broke out, and being chosen in his twenty-fifth year to represent his county in the Virginian Assembly, he soon withdrew his attention from legal pursuits, and finally abandoned them altogether, when he led the way to the Revolution by his Resolution which the Assembly adopted to establish a Committee of Correspondence with the legislatures of the other colonies. The Convention, and then the General Congress, soon followed; indeed, they grew naturally out of the Committee, and only waited the next

act of oppression from England to mature them. Yet still there was the most marked reluctance to throw off the yoke of the mother country. Jefferson himself, in a letter to the Attorney-General, Randolph, written so late as the middle of 1775, and after the first blood that stained the unhappy quarrel had been shed, declared that "in the whole empire there was not a man who more cordially loved the union with Great Britain;" but he added his fixed resolution not to bear taxation without representation.* Even after the battle of Bunker's Hill he expressed to his old master, Dr. Small, then settled in Scotland, his anxious hopes of conciliation. The party called moderate, in contradistinction to the Washingtons and Jeffersons, that under Dickenson, was not less prepared for desperate extremities, if the cardinal point of taxation should not be conceded by England. It is certain, and it is the greatest praise which can be bestowed upon any people in such circumstances, that all parties were guided by men who united

* The thoughtless folly of some in the United States and some in France likening the case of the Union with Ireland to the subordination of America, exceeds belief. Who in America would ever have rebelled, nay who would ever have agitated, if the Americans had been represented in our Parliament? Adam Smith, who proposed a general taxation of the empire to pay the public debt (Wealth of Nations, b. v. ch. 3), coupled it with the Irish Union and a representation to America and the West Indies.

extraordinary firmness with singular moderation —men, above all, whose singleness of purpose never appears in any instance to have been suspected—men who would have shuddered at the bare thought of levying a rent upon the feelings of the people which their arts had excited.

But if, in contemplating their whole conduct in the different courses which they had to steer, we look in vain for any deviation from the line of principle and integrity, we also find it impossible to discover any material error of judgment committed in the whole management of their perilous and perplexing affairs. From all the unreflecting violence, the sudden changes, the intemperate excesses, the thoughtless desertion of leaders, the alternations of popular admiration and hatred, by which other revolutions have been so constantly distinguished, when the people were the principal agents in bringing them about, it must be confessed with wonder that the conduct of the Americans was wholly exempt. No deliberative assembly of men, small in number and acting free from all popular instigation or control, ever carried on the affairs of a community settled in peace, and whose existence was assured, with greater calmness or more steady judgment than the American Congress showed in guiding a revolutionary movement, involving at each step of its progress their own exist-

ence and that of the community whom they repre sented and governed.

When it seemed manifest that neither side would yield, and a separation became inevitable, a committee of five, at the head of whom was Jefferson, received the commission to prepare a manifesto of their reasons for at length taking the great step. His colleagues were Franklin, Adams, Sherman, and Livingston; the paper was prepared by him; they made few alterations, but the Congress omitted about a third part of it, in order to avoid topics that might give offence in the mother country. Among these omissions was a paragraph reprobating the African slave-trade, to which they might not unjustly suppose England was partial, inasmuch as she had formerly interposed her authority—shamefully, scandalously, wickedly interposed it—to prevent the Abolition earnestly desired by her colonial subjects. Nevertheless, it is possible that the omission was also made with a view to conciliate the slave-holding states who had not yet resolved to set their faces against this great abomination. With these omissions, and the further alteration of a few lines, the instrument was finally adopted, and it was signed on the Fourth of July.

This is that famous *Declaration of Independence* by which the freemen of the New world approved themselves worthy of their ancestors in the Old—

those ancestors who had spoken, and written, and fought, and perished for conscience and for freedom's sake,—but whose descendants in the Old had not always borne their high lineage in mind. In the history of mankind there is no more important event, on which side soever of the Atlantic its consequences may be regarded; and if tyrants are sometimes said to feel uneasy on the Thirtieth of January, how much more fitted to inspire alarm are the recollections associated with the Fourth of July, in which no remorse can mingle on the people's part, and no consolation is afforded to their oppressors by the tendency of cruelty and injustice to mar the work they stain!

I have noted the unfortunate omission of the paragraph relating to the Slave Trade; and it is only just to Jefferson's memory that it should here be inserted. The frame of the Declaration was to charge all the grievances complained of directly upon the King of England.

"He has waged cruel war against human nature itself, violating its most sacred rights of life and liberty in the persons of a distant people, who never offended him, captivating* and carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere, or to more miserable death in their transportation thither. The piratical

* As usual, this will be reckoned an Americanism (as the Greeks used to say of their colonists, a Solœcism). But it has undoubted English authority—Locke among others.

warfare, the opprobrium of infidel powers, is the warfare of the Christian King of Great Britain. Determined to keep open a market where men should be bought and sold, he has prostituted his prerogative for suppressing every legislative attempt to prohibit or restrain this execrable commerce. And, that this assemblage of horrors might want no fact of distinguished die, he is now exciting these very people to rise in arms among us, and to purchase that liberty of which he has deprived them, by murdering the people on whom he also has obtruded them; thus paying off former crimes committed against the *liberties* of one people with crimes which he urges them to commit against the *lives* of another."

It is to the unspeakable honour of Jefferson, that, born and bred in Virginia, himself an owner of negroes like all Virginian landholders, his first motion in the assembly was a proposition to facilitate the manumission of slaves. It was not till 1782 that the full power of emancipation was given by the legislature. But his proposal in 1779 was still further in advance of his age; it was to declare all children of slaves, born after a certain day, free, and to carry them forth at a certain age as colonists of a new territory—the only practical scheme, perhaps, by which the foul blot of slavery can be removed from the United States.

His plan for the planting of elementary schools to educate the whole people, and of establishing

colleges for the middle classes, and an university for the higher branches of learning, was fated to experience similar delays, though happily not so long protracted; in 1796 it was partially, and in 1816 wholly, adopted by the Virginian legislature. In another favourite scheme he was more successful. The English law against perpetuities had strangely been modified, or rather abrogated, in Virginia, in the reign of Queen Anne; so that there was no power of cutting off an entail by fine or recovery, or in any other way than by a private or estate bill. Early in the Revolutionary war Jefferson succeeded in repealing this colonial law, and he soon after also obtained an abrogation of the law of primogeniture. The effect of the change has been great, and has spread universally in Virginia. Men's disposition of their property has followed the legal provision; no one thinks of making an eldest son his general heir; a corresponding division of wealth has taken place; there is no longer a class living in luxurious indulgence, while others are dependent and poor; you no longer see so many great equipages, but you meet everywhere with carriages sufficient for use and comfort; and though formerly some families possessed more plate than any one house can now show, the whole plate in the country (says a late historian) is increased forty if not fifty fold. It is affirmed with equal confidence, that though the class of over refined persons has been exceedingly cur-

tailed, if not exterminated, the number of well-educated people has been incalculably increased. Nor does a session pass without disclosing talents which, sixty or seventy years ago, would have been deemed so rare as to carry a name from south to north of the Union.

Jefferson, however, was not more zealous in promoting all measures which might prevent the growth of aristocratic distinctions and maintain the level of republican equality, than he was in furthering whatever might tend to complete religious liberty, with which he conscientiously deemed an established church to be incompatible. Upon this subject we may entertain a very different opinion, and may, with the most entire devotion to the principles of toleration, be able to descry dangers to those principles from the zeal of sects, as well as from the preponderance of a state church. No one who contemplates the intolerance exercised during the times of the Commonwealth in this country can repose any great reliance upon the meekness or the liberality of conflicting sectaries, while it must be admitted by all men, even by candid dissenters, that the Established Church is a mild ruler to those within her pale, a quiet and inoffensive neighbour to those without. But how far a church establishment is compatible with purely republican institutions is a very different question; and it would be most rash to condemn

Jefferson's persevering efforts for eradicating all ecclesiastical privileges, when we reflect that he was acting as a strict, even a stern, republican. The clergy of Virginia had from the earliest settlement of the colony been endowed not only with tithe but with a parochial assessment, although the proportion of dissenters had increased to almost an equality with the numbers of the churchmen. It was not till the year 1799 that Jefferson's efforts were crowned with entire success, and the last marks of preference to one church over the rest were finally effaced. They who agreed with him in opinion upon this important subject maintain confidently that all remains of religious intolerance have been extinguished by those measures, and that the means of spiritual instruction have been greatly extended; but how far the cause of sound and rational religion generally has gained, can only be ascertained by the experience of a longer time.

After having for two years held the office of Governor of Virginia by election, Jefferson was in 1782 chosen to represent that state in Congress. But it was no longer the same body in which he had acted during the tempestuous period of the Revolution, when it consisted only of 50 or 60 persons, all men of business, men of action. He was abundantly sensible of the difference, and looking back on the days when "the Washingtons and the Franklins were wont at once to seize the great

point of a question, leaving the little ones to follow of themselves, and never treat two arguments at a time," he adds, "if the present Congress errs in too much talking, how can it be otherwise in a body to which the people send 150 lawyers, whose trade it is to question everything, yield nothing, and talk by the hour?" From this scene he was not sorry to be released by accepting the mission to Paris, where he remained as minister of the United States from 1784 till 1790. The interest which he took in the great Revolution may well be conceived, intimately connected as it was with the American independence; but his foresight of its progress was not clearer than other men's, for he never doubted that a year after his return to America would see the "certain and happy termination of the struggle for liberty."

He now, at Washington's earnest request, overcame the hearty desire which he had of retiring into private life, and became his Secretary of State. If any one could doubt that great man's sincerely republican feelings, this anxiety for the introduction into his cabinet of the very chief of the democratic party must at once dispel all such fancies. The able and virtuous leader of the Federalists in that cabinet was Hamilton, Secretary of the Treasury; Knox, the Secretary at War, joined him; while Randolph, the Attorney-General, sided with Jefferson. But Washington, taking part with neither,

held the balance even between them with the scrupulous justice which marked his lofty nature, and with the firm hand which he of all men most possessed. It is strange, it is melancholy, to see the folly of sanguine men in pertinaciously believing that those things have a real existence which they vehemently wish were true. Because Washington never took part with the French faction, and kept aloof from the more violent movements of the democratic party, and because Hamilton and others of the Federalists despaired of a republican government being practicable, or at least permanent, in a great community, the party in this country most opposed to popular institutions, and who retained a hankering after monarchical government in America, must needs flatter themselves that there remained in the United States a leaning towards the British yoke, and that at all events the illustrious President as well as the Federalist chiefs were friendly to kingly power. The truth is, that even Hamilton, the most open admirer of our institutions, never dreamed of giving them another trial in America, until all attempts to establish a lasting republic should be found to fail. His words were remarkable in recommending that all other modifications of popular government should be tried before recourse was again had to monarchy. "That mind," he said, "must be really depraved which would not prefer the equality of political

rights, the foundation of pure republicanism, if it were to be obtained eventually with order." Accordingly each year that what he regarded as the great, though not very promising experiment, continued without a failure—each year that the American constitution proved sufficient for the government of the rapidly-extending people—diminished those apprehensions upon which alone his opinion rested. But Washington never felt any such fears, and wanted no experience to confirm his deliberate purpose of a republic. Towards England he never felt any sentiments but those of distrust and alienation ; and his well-considered judgment respecting a return to monarchy may be easily gathered from his remarkable expression when endeavouring to prevent Jefferson's resignation in 1793, even after the excesses of the French Revolution had lessened the number of republicans everywhere, "that he did not believe there were ten men in the United States for a monarchy." They who flattered themselves that Washington was disposed to content those ten may be classed with the men whose sanguine temperament no disappointments can cure,—the class among whom, unhappily, Mr. Pitt held an eminent place, as he showed when a friend carried him a letter from Geneva, mentioning the assembling of an army of reserve near Dijon, and received for answer from the minister, that "he must have a very disaffected correspondent." The army,

whose existence at Dijon was thus deemed impossible, because it was unpleasant, in less than a month after decided the fate of Europe at Marengo.

When Washington resigned, Jefferson was proposed for the Presidency, but Adams obtained it, and he was chosen Vice-President. At the expiration of Adams's three years, Jefferson succeeded him; and set an example to all party chiefs when promoted to power. He made it his rule never either to remove an adversary because his own partisans required it, or to retain one because his enemies threatened and assailed him. He pursued his own course, regardless of the taunts from one party or the importunity of the other; and, although exposed to more unmeasured abuse than any man that ever filled his high station, he lived to see full justice done him, and the firm and manly course of his administration generally approved. It is profitable to consider such an example; and they who are unable to follow it respecting measures as well as men, may be well assured that they mistook their vocation when they assumed to direct the councils of their country. Whoever suffers himself to be seduced or deterred from the path of his duty, does not rule, but obey; he usurps the place of others; he pretends to guide, when he slavishly follows; but he puts forth false pretences, and would be understood to act for himself, while he is but a tool in other men's hands; he meanly under-

taking the responsibility for the profit or the patronage, they dictating his conduct while they skulk in the dark. It is a compact equally dishonouring both the parties, and of which the country, whose best interests are sacrificed by it, has the most just right to complain.

Although Jefferson retired from public life at the close of his second presidency, in 1806, his days were prolonged for twenty years beyond that period, and these he passed on his estate in Virginia, superintending agricultural improvements, and watching over the university which he had founded and which he regarded with unceasing parental care. Like the other chief magistrates of the Republic, he retired without any fortune, and his property was at his decease found barely sufficient to pay his debts. It was a singular and affecting coincidence, that when the people were assembled in countless numbers to celebrate the Fiftieth anniversary of the American Independence, the passing-bell should toll of Adams, one of the last surviving patriots who had signed the memorable act of the Fourth of July. On that day he expired; but it was after a few days found, that at the same time another of the patriarchs of the New World had also rested from his labours; the author of that famous instrument had, on the same day, closed his earthly course, in his 84th year.

It is impossible to close the page of history which records the foundation of the Great Republic, without adverting to the singular change that seems of late years to have come over some friends of liberty in this country, inclining them against the popular institutions which that system consecrates, and upon which it reposes. Writers of ability, but scantily endowed with candour, observers of moderate circumspection, men labouring under the prejudices of European society, and viewing the social system of the New World through the medium of habits and associations peculiar to that of the Old, have brought back for our information a number of details, for which they needed hardly to cross the Atlantic, and have given us as discoveries a relation of matters necessarily existing under a very popular government, and in a very new community. As those travellers had pretty generally failed to make many converts among the friends of free institutions either in France or in England, there would have been little harm done to the cause of truth, and no great interruption given to the friendly relations which the highest interests of both countries require should be maintained unbroken between them. But unhappily some persons of a superior class appear, from party or from personal feelings, to have, without due reflection on the mischief they were doing, suffered their minds to be poisoned by the

same prejudices; and, a signal indiscretion having suffered their private letters, written under the influence of such prepossessions, to see the light, it becomes every one, whose general opinions coincide with those of the individuals in question, to protest against the inference that such sentiments are shared by the Liberal party in England. This becomes the more necessary, in consequence of the tendency which the most reprehensible conduct of some of the States in the Union towards their public creditors has to prepare the way for the reception of such unsound opinions—opinions which, if left to themselves, would probably soon sink into oblivion, how respectable soever the quarters which they may, without due reflection, have been suffered to reach. I allude more particularly to some letters lately published of Lord Sydenham, written confidentially to his late colleagues, while he was acting under them as Governor-General of British North America—letters the publication of which has, to me, who knew their writer, and respected his generally sound principles, been a subject of much regret, which he appears to have written in a moment of some irritation, but which would do serious injury to the good understanding that happily has been restored between the two nations, if they were supposed to speak the sense of those among us who are most friendly to America.

A great deal of vague and general abuse may be passed over, as that the Americans "are a calculating people, and fight not for glory but plunder" —"such a set of braggadocios, that their public men must submit to the claims of their extravagant vanity and self-sufficiency"—that there is among them a "general debasement"—"that those who aim at place are corrupt and corrupters, and the masses who bestow preferment ignorant, prejudiced, dishonest, and utterly immoral." I fear me most if not all of this railing might be retorted upon a certain nation whose wars in China have been warmly eulogised by Lord Sydenham in another letter, though he is greatly scandalised that all the glory of his friends is not likely to prevent their seats "slipping from under them;"* a nation whose general elections have of late years been found a scene of the most hateful corruption, although we should be guilty of a most gross and unpardonable exaggeration were we on this account to stigmatize the whole people as "utterly immoral" in the

* The *naïveté* of this passage is exceedingly great. "But what is the use of all this glory if your seats slip from under you?" Then, after a great abuse of John Bull, "I am afraid that the possession of power is making me terribly inclined to despotism, for I am thinking of planting my cabbages rather under the shade of Metternich or the Czar," &c., p. 326. To be sure; and this is exactly the consequence of being Governor-General with dictatorial power.

terms rashly applied to his neighbours by the Canadian Governor.

But the charges which he allows himself to lay, and which his relatives have thought it right to publish, are more specific. "The Government seems to me the worst of tyrannies, that of the mob supported by the most odious and profligate corruption. No man who aims at power dare avow an opinion of his own; he must pander to the lowest prejudices of the people, and in their parties (the two great ones which now divide the Union, the Loco-focos and the Whigs) the only subject of the leading men of either is to instil some wretchedly low sentiment into the people, and then explode it for their own advantage. There is scarcely a statesman of either who would not adopt the most violent or the basest doctrine however, if he thought that he could work it to advantage with the majority—peculation and jobbing are the only objects; delusion, and the basest flattery of the people, the means."—"If," adds this discreet statesman, "they drive us into a war, the *Blacks* in the South will soon settle all that part of the Union; and in the North I feel sure that we can lick them to their hearts' content."—"A Republic could answer in former times, in countries where was *no people*, or few; the bulk of the population Helots and slaves; but where there is a people, and they really have the power government is only

possible by pandering to their worst passions, which makes the country unbearable to a man of any education, and the Central Government itself a byword amongst civilized nations. I hope (he concludes, perhaps consistently enough) that we may live long enough to see this great bubble burst; and I do not believe that we need be very long-lived for that" (316).

I am sorry to be under the necessity of declaring that one is at a loss whether most to marvel at the total want of common reflection, or the extraordinary want of common information, in this passage—the production of a man in high office, addressed to a man still higher, and who presumes, without any deliberation, and with no knowledge of the subject, to pronounce so sweeping a censure upon the whole body of a great nation, all their statesmen, and all their institutions. It is fit the Americans should well understand that these are the errors and this the rashness of the late Governor-General of Canada, and not shared by the Liberal party, or by any but the most ignorant and the most prejudiced in this country.

First of all, Lord Sydenham is no authority on the subject of the United States, merely because he was Governor of Canada, and never in the Union at all. Had he remained in London he would have been as well qualified to judge of those States, as his living near them for two years could

make him; nay, a great deal better; for his residence in Canada, without giving him one tittle more of information, had the manifest tendency to fill his mind with Canadian prejudices; and these views seem to have gained a still greater ascendant over him by the disputes of a border nature, in which he was involved. I should, during the separation of England and Scotland before the seventeenth century, never have looked to the Warden of the West Marches for a candid account of the people on the Scotch border when he lived at Carlisle. But, had the Warden directed his hostile operations from York or from Lincoln, I should have believed him just as ignorant as if he had lived in London, and a very great deal more prejudiced.

Next, let us observe how little the Governor-General had studied constitutions when he assumes the office of deciding on their comparative merits. It would not be easy to crowd more manifest errors into one sentence than are found in the few lines about ancient republics. Many things respecting those systems are obscurely known, and are therefore the subject of controversy; but no one ever affected to doubt of the matters on which this strange sentence errs, and errs dogmatically. Sparta is of course alluded to by the mention of Helots; but Sparta was not a republican, it was an aristocratic government. Then Athens, which was a republic, so far from proving that such a govern-

ment "could answer," is precisely the example always resorted to in order to prove what Lord Sydenham states to be the vice of the American Government as contrasted with the Grecian, namely, the statesman "pandering to the passions of the people." Yet, this notwithstanding, can any one say that Athens, the very seat of this worst of vices, was by it "made unbearable to a man of any education?" Does he conceive that any of us, even in Canada, are more refined, more civilized, more educated, than the ornaments of Athenian society, the very men who were fain to court the people? It is another error equally great to make it the peculiar characteristic of the modern republic, and the feature that distinguishes it from the ancient, that the "people really had the power." In Athens, if anywhere, they really had the power; we are only left to speculate on the restraints under which it was exercised, and even to doubt if any such existed in practice. But assuredly the bulk of the power was in their hands more than in any other democracy, ancient or modern.

That in the American Government there exist great imperfections no man can doubt; one among the greatest has lately been removed, because the central power of the Federacy is now enabled better to maintain its relations with foreign states in consequence of the recent improvement of the constitutional law. But there remain blots which

still disfigure the system, and in practice sadly mar its working. Of these the very worst, undoubtedly, is the entire change of public functionaries, from the highest to the lowest, which follows every change of the President, converts all the more considerable members of the community into place-hunters, and makes the whole interval, between one election of chief magistrate and another, a constant scene of canvass. The removal of this and a few other imperfections would make the Government of America as faultless as a very popular system can ever be. That some and even considerable evils would be left, evils inseparable from a Republic, because growing out of the large share assigned to the people in the distribution of power, cannot be doubted. But it is no discovery of Lord Sydenham's that as long as men are men power and pre-eminence will be sought after; and that if the right of bestowing these is vested in the people, the people will be courted by those who seek after them.

We are upon a practical, not a speculative, question; and that question is not as to the impossible attainment of theoretical perfection, but as to the comparative merits of different schemes of polity. Power must rest in some part of the community. Patronage must immediately or ultimately rest with them that have power. Shall they be the people at large? No, says Lord

Sydenham; for if the people are to choose their ministers, they who would fill ministerial places will debase themselves by pandering to the people's prejudices. But what if we intrust this delicate office to a court or a prince, for the purpose of making the duty be more uprightly discharged, and exalting the character of the candidates for favour? Are we so blinded by the evils of popular canvass as to have all of a sudden forgotten that other time-serving, that old species of fawning, that worser form of flattery, which the friends of freedom and of purity used to charge upon the parasites of princes, the crew of courtiers, the minions who pander to the propensities, not of the people, but the despot? Then shall power and patronage be vested in a patrician body, in a class of men whom "a man of education" might well find not "unbearable?" The class fawned upon would here no doubt be found more refined in its tastes, and must be propitiated with a more dainty flattery. Yet I question if the fawning would be less active, if the suppleness of the candidate for favour would be less pliant, if the senator would be less given to cringe, than they who, instead of crawling in the ante-room of the noble, after a more homely fashion take the hand of the peasant and the mechanic. I greatly doubt if less falsehood will be found in the smooth speeches addressed to the select patrician circle than in the boisterous

harangues delivered to win the plebeian. One ground of my doubt is the recollection which we all have of the scenes of endless intrigue and widespread corruption displayed by the aristocratic courts of modern Italy, to say nothing of ancient Rome in her more patrician days; and another ground of my doubt is precisely this, that men are more prone to practise deception in secret than in public, and therefore more likely to use unworthy arts in the closet, the appointed scene of intrigue, than on the hustings, from whence the grosser species of intrigue, at least, must for ever be banished.*

And here is furnished a very striking proof of the entire carelessness with which this political reasoner made his observations upon America, and formed his opinions respecting her people. He plainly affirms of all statesmen in the United States that "their only objects are peculation and jobbing;" and their means of being able to peculate and job are "the basest flattery of the people." Now surely a very little reflection would have sufficed to satisfy any considerate person that this charge is wholly impossible. The existence of

* We must hold even the balance, and blame bad arts, however applied. That I am as far as possible from excusing the unworthy arts of demagogues, above all, their corrupting the people by their vile practices, may appear under the head of Wilkes.

such violent party divisions, and the publicity with which every department of Government is administered, make peculation impracticable. They might as well be charged with "compassing and imagining the death of the King." It is an offence which in such a country can have no existence. But this manifest error into which the writer has fallen, while it shows the strength of his prejudices against the Americans, proves also the weakness of his means of annoyance, and it is a sufficient answer to much of his general invective.

As to the standing topic of vulgar manners, let it be fairly stated that there are many parts both of France and England to which we should not think of resorting were we in quest of patterns, not of printed goods but polished manners. Even while representing Manchester, Lord Sydenham would hardly have cited the bulk of his constituents as superior in elegance to the people of New York. But an authority fully as high as himself on this delicate matter, M. de Lafayette, would, as I personally know, have severely chid him for underrating even the manners of the Americans; and if, after such an authority, any further defence were required, two facts may be mentioned. Sir R. Liston declared that he had never conversed with a better bred sovereign in any court of Europe than General Washington; and among the women of the highest breeding in our day no one would

hesitate to mention Lady Wellesley.* They who have never been in the United States may surely be pardoned if they feel unable to believe the notion entertained by others who, like themselves and Lord Sydenham, have also never been there, but who would yet assume General Washington and Lady Wellesley to be the only persons of fine manners ever produced in the Union.

It is, however, not avowedly on the score of their under-breeding that the Governor-General rests his dislike of the Americans. On the contrary, he rather seems disposed to pass that head of complaint lightly, though it is plainly enough at the bottom of many feelings upon the subject. His main accusation is the mob tyranny, and the habit of their public men quailing before it. No doubt a certain degree of this evil is inseparable from every popular Government. Who in Ireland dares profess any opinion hostile to the Romish hierarchy throughout three of the provinces, or favourable to it in the fourth? No rational politician dares attend a popular meeting now in that country for fear of Repeal, which not one single member of either House of Parliament will vote for,

* Others might well be added. For example, Lady Ashburton; but her long residence in this country prevents all, excepting a few, from recollecting that she came from America in her younger days as highly accomplished in manners as the world has more lately seen her.

save a few Irishmen under mob influence. Who in 1831 was safe in England if he proclaimed his dislike of the Reform Bill? What public meeting has any moderate liberal politician ventured to hold of late years? Have not even the corn-law repealers been fain to raise the popular cry of cheap bread in assemblies collected by tickets, and from which the multitude were carefully excluded? We may not go so far as the Americans in humouring the popular cry of the hour when we address our constituents, because our Government is less purely popular than theirs; but can any one doubt that the speeches of our political chiefs—aye, and even their measures when in office—take the tincture of the multitude to whom they are addressed, and whose favour they are expected to conciliate? If this be denied, we may require to be informed what Lord Sydenham precisely means when—adverting to the free-trade measures respecting timber, sugar, and, above all, corn, in 1841—he says, "It is an immense point gained to get a new flag under which to fight. The people of England do not care a rush for any of your Irish hobby-horses; and they are not with you upon Church matters, or grievances of that kind. Even your foreign policy has not touched them the least, and I doubt whether twenty victories would give you a borough or a county; but you have now given them an intelligible principle offering practical

benefits to contend for, and though defeated on it, as you doubtless will be, defeat will be attended with reputation, and will make you, as a party in the country, far stronger than you have been of late" (p. 90). Now it is to be observed that the preference here given to the Corn Bill over the Irish Church Reform and the other measures is not rested on the relative merits, but solely on the relative popular tendency, of the different plans—their *capabilities* as "flags to fight under;" and the Corn Law is preferred because it is a better party Shibboleth. No doubt Lord Sydenham would have a right to urge that he had always maintained the free-trade doctrine for its own sake; but why will he not allow American statesmen also to prefer each his several tenets for their own sakes? Suppose he had found a letter from Mr. Stevenson to a South Carolina friend maintaining that some proposition for preventing anti-slavery petitions being received by Congress was a fine "flag to fight under," "offered an intelligible principle to contend for," and, though defeated, would make the Virginian "party stronger than it had of late been," how little would it have availed to urge that Mr. Stevenson had always held the same opinions? How triumphantly would Lord Sydenham have pointed to this letter as a confession that American statesmen frame their conduct upon the plan of pandering to the tastes and pas-

sions of the multitude? And would it have been deemed an answer to his inference if it had appeared that the party proposing this extreme course had never thought of it for ten years which they had passed in office, but merely brought it forward when all other means of obtaining influence had failed, and when their fortunes among the constituent bodies of the country were become desperate?

But these are possibly extreme cases. Are there no other instances, even in our own better regulated system, so much less disfigured by popular excess than the American;—no instances of public men shaping their conduct and their speeches according to the opinions and feelings, or even the tastes and caprices, of the people, either generally or locally? Surely common fairness towards the Americans required some consideration of the tone taken in our own election addresses, of the speeches made on our own hustings and at our public meetings, of the difference between these and the parliamentary speeches of the same individuals, nay, of the well known difference between the conduct of parliament itself during its first and its last session. What minister ever ventured to propose a civil list on the eve of a general election?

The arts to which our attention is directed by these remarks are in the highest degree discreditable to all who use them, and are incalculably hurtful

to the people upon whom they are practised. If they are, to a certain extent, inseparable from a very popular Government, their mischief forms a serious deduction from the merits of that system. To restrain them within the narrowest possible limits is the bounden duty of all statesmen, but most especially is it the duty of those who maintain the superior advantages of a popular constitution. Them, above all others, it behoves not to lower the character of popular men, not to corrupt the people themselves; for it must never be forgotten that the flattery and the falsehood which taint the atmosphere of a court, the poison which tyrants inhale with their earliest breath, cannot with impunity be inspired by the people.

After all, in estimating the merits of any Government, we must never lose sight of what is the end of all government—the comfort and happiness of the people. It may safely be admitted that if a scheme could be devised for embodying a legislature of wise, virtuous, and enlightened men, with an executive council of capacity, integrity, firmness, removed from popular control, animated with the desire of furthering the public good, and consulting, in the pursuit of it, no will or authority but their own chastened judgment, a much purer and more noble Government would be constituted than any that owes its origin to the public choice, and acts under the people's superintendence. But, unhappily, experience has proved that any legislature,

and any executive body, removed from all control, soon forgets the end of its creation; and instead of consulting the good of the community at large, confines all its exertions to furthering its own individual interest. So it must ever be until we are blessed with a descent of angels to undertake the management of our concerns. Till then there is but one security for the community—a watchful superintendence and an efficient control over its representatives and rulers. The experiment may be coarse and clumsy; it may be attended with evils of a very serious kind; it may give rise to an unfortunate influence being exercised by classes of the people who are neither very refined nor always very honest, nor even very well informed as to their own interests. Nevertheless, as human society is constituted, in the choice of evils this is the least; it admits of many compensations; it gives the prospect of much diminution as knowledge and as virtue advance; whereas any system that excludes the popular voice must needs lead to a thraldom and to abuses which admit of no compensation, and, instead of wearing out in time, only gather strength and acquire increased malignity with every year that revolves.

The worst of all the features in the Union Lord Sydenham has no doubt passed entirely over—the disgraceful prejudices against negro emancipation. But even these may yield to circumstances, and give place to more rational as well as more humane

views of national policy, provided a free government continues to bless America, and no catastrophe happens to destroy the Union. Lord Sydenham indeed is thoughtless enough to view with a kind of exultation the prospect of negro insurrection as a consequence of the United States daring to wage war with England. Misguided, short-sighted man! and ignorant, oh, profoundly ignorant of the things that belong to the peace and the happiness of either colour in the New World! A negro revolt in our islands, where the whites are as a handful among their sable brethren, might prove fatal to European life, but the African at least would be secure, as far as security can be derived by wading through rivers of blood. But on the continent, where the numbers of the two colours are evenly balanced, and all the arms are in the white man's hands, who but the bitterest enemy of the unhappy slaves could bear to contemplate their wretchedness in the attempt by violence to shake off their chains!—Then again he feels quite confident that the northern states must be utterly defeated, and easily defeated, as soon as they draw the sword against England. Possibly; and yet this inference has not been very logically drawn by Lord Sydenham from the history of the former American war. When the people of the colonies numbered less than three millions, they defeated the best troops of England, possessed as she was of all the strongholds of the country, and sweeping the ocean with her fleets, before the infant

Republic had a flag floating upon the seas. That twenty-four millions, with entire possession of the land, and a formidable fleet at sea, should be overwhelmed by the Canadians and Nova Scotians, is certainly a possible event; but that it is as much a matter of course as the Governor of these petty settlements complacently assures himself, may reasonably be doubted. Nay it seems barely possible that some notion should creep into the minds of the Americans, as how a war might lead to the very opposite result, of Canada joining with the United States, and forming an additional member of that great confederacy.

They, however, who are the best friends of both countries, must be the least willing to indulge on either side in such speculations. The Americans will, it is to be hoped, not be tempted to form such pernicious projects by any notion of a hostile feeling towards them prevailing in this country. They may be well assured, that far from regarding their Government as "a bubble," and trusting that it soon may burst, the universal sentiment in England is the hope that it may long continue to exhibit the proud spectacle of popular freedom, and even popular power, combined with order at home, and moderation abroad, in successful refutation of all the old opinions that a republic was impossible in a large territory with a numerous people.

LONDON

MARQUESS WELLESLEY.

If any one were desired to name the family in modern times which, like the Gracchi at Rome, peculiarly excelled all others in the virtues and in the renown of its members, there could hardly be any hesitation in pitching upon the illustrious house of which Lord Mornington, afterwards Marquess Wellesley, was the head. But I had the happiness of a long and uninterrupted friendship with that great man, and enjoyed more particularly his unreserved confidence during the last ten or twelve years of his life. It is fit, therefore, that I distrust my own feelings towards his memory; and in order to preserve impartiality, the first duty of an historian, but the most difficult in writing contemporary history, I shall confine myself in treating of him to the facts which are beyond all controversy, and which, indeed are the best heralds of his fame.

The family of the Wellesleys originally came from Somersetshire, and by intermarriage with the Cowleys or Colleys, and by a devise from the Poles,* obtained large property in Ireland, where

* Lord Maryborough, on his brother's decease Lord

they were, in 1756, raised to the Peerage. About sixty years ago they took the name of Wellesley, which, I believe, was their more ancient appellation also in this country, that of Wesley being of recent date. The father of the present generation was a person of talents and virtue, and his taste in music being cultivated in an extraordinary degree, he was the author of some beautiful compositions, which still retain their place in the favour of the musical world. Dying while some of his children were very young, the care of their education was left to their mother,* a daughter of Lord Dungannon, and the family fortune being in considerable embarrassment, her merit in bringing them through some difficulties, training them to such

Mornington, was the person to whom this valuable gift was made by a gentleman distantly related to the family. His lordship was then a young midshipman, and was offered the fortune upon condition that he quitted the navy and came to reside with his kinsman. But this he refused, as the war still continued, and he thought leaving the service before the peace would be dishonourable. He supposed, as did his family, that there was an end of the benefaction; but the old gentleman declared by his will that such conduct only increased his esteem for the young man, and left him the Pole estate.

* She was daughter to the first Viscount Dungannon. Her brother died before his father; and the second and late Viscount Dungannon was her nephew. Her father was son to the great-great-grandfather of the present Marquess of Downshire. Hence the relationship of the Wellesleys to the Downshire, Salisbury, and Talbot families.

excellence and such eminence as few families ever attained, exceeds all ordinary praise. This truly venerable matron was permitted by Divine Providence to reap the highest reward which such rare virtues as adorned her character can, in this stage of our existence, receive; for her life was extended to an extreme old age; she saw all the glories of Hindostan, of Spain, and of Waterloo; and left four sons sitting in the House of Lords, not by inheritance, but "by merit raised to that proud eminence."*

Richard, the eldest son, who at his father's death had nearly attained majority, was first sent to Harrow, where he took part in a great rebellion that had well-nigh proved fatal to the school. This occasioned his expulsion, and he then went to Eton, where he was distinguished above all the youths of his time. When Dr. Goodall, his contemporary and afterwards Head master, was examined in 1818 before the Education Committee of the House of Commons respecting the alleged passing over of Porson in giving promotion to King's College, he at once declared that the celebrated Grecian was not by any means at the head of the Etonians of his day, and on being asked by me (as chairman)

* It is related of Lady Mornington, that on a crowd pressing round and obstructing her carriage when on a visit to the House late in her life, she said to Lord Cowley, who accompanied her, "So much for the honour of being mother of the Gracchi!"

to name his superior, he at once said Lord Wellesley.* Some of his verses in the *Musæ Etonenses* have great merit, as examples both of pure Latinity and poetical talent. The lines on Bedlam, especially, are of distinguished excellence. At Christ Church, whither he went from Eton, and where he studied under Dr. W. Jackson (afterwards Bishop of Oxford), he continued successfully engaged in classical studies, and his poem on the death of Captain Cook showed how entirely he had kept up his school reputation: it justly gained the University prize. In his riper years he retained the same classical taste which had been created at school and nurtured at College. At no time of his life does it appear that he abandoned these literary pursuits, so well fitted to be the recreation of a mind like his. On the eve of his departure for the East he wrote, at Mr. Pitt's desire, those beautiful verses on French conquest, which were first published in the 'Anti-Jacobin,' and of which the present Lord Carlisle, a most finished scholar and a man of true poetical genius, gave a translation of peculiar felicity. Nor did the same taste and the same power of happy and easy versification quit him in

* Some one of the Committee would have had this struck out of the evidence, as not bearing upon the matter of the inquiry, the Abuse of Charities; but the general voice was immediately pronounced in favour of retaining it, as a small tribute of our great respect for Lord Wellesley; and I know that he highly valued this tribute.

his old age. As late as a few weeks before his death he amused himself with Latin verses, was constant in reading the Greek orators and poets, and corresponded with the Bishop of Durham upon a favourite project which he had formed of learning Hebrew, that he might be able to relish the beauties of the Sacred writings, particularly the Psalmody, an object of much admiration with him. His exquisite lines* on the 'Babylonian Willow, transplanted from the Euphrates a hundred years ago,' were suggested by the delight he took in the 137th Psalm, the most affecting and beautiful of the inspired king's whole poetry. This fine piece was the production of his eightieth year.

At Oxford he formed with Lord Grenville a friendship which continued during their lives, and led to his intimacy with Lord Grenville's great kinsman, Mr. Pitt, upon their entering into public life. That amiable man was sure to set its right value upon a heart so gentle, a spirit so high, and accomplishments so brilliant as Lord Wellesley's; but it is perhaps one of the most striking proofs which can be given of the fearless confidence reposed by the young minister in his own resources, that at a time when the phalanx of opposition was marshalled by no less men than Fox, Burke, Windham, and Sheridan, and when he had not a single cabinet colleague ever heard in debate, nor

* *Salix Babylonica.*

indeed any auxiliary at all save Lord Melville, he never should have deemed it worth his while to promote Lord Wellesley, whose powers as a speaker were of a high order, and with whom he lived on the most intimate footing. The trifling place of a puisne Lord of the Treasury, and a member of the India Board, formed all the preferment which he received before his appointment as Governor-General of India, although that important nomination sufficiently shows the high estimate which Mr. Pitt had formed of his capacity.

In the Lords' House of the Irish Parliament Lord Wellesley (then Lord Mornington) first showed those great powers which a more assiduous devotion to the rhetorical art would certainly have ripened into an oratory of the highest order. For he was thoroughly imbued with the eloquence of ancient Greece and Rome, his pure taste greatly preferring, of course, the former. The object of his study, however, had been principally the four great orations (on the Crown and the Embassy); and I wondered to find him in his latter years so completely master of all the passages in these perfect models, and this before the year 1839, when he began again to read over more than once the Homeric poems and the orations of Demosthenes. I spent much time with him in examining and comparing the various parts of those divine works, in estimating their relative excellence, and in discuss-

ing the connexion of the great passages and of the argument with the plan of each oration. But I recollect also being surprised to find that he had so much neglected the lesser orations; and that, dazzled as it were with the one which is no doubt incomparably superior to all others as a whole, he not only for some time would not allow his full share of praise to Æschines, whose oration against Ctesiphon is truly magnificent, all but the end of the peroration, and whose oration on the Embassy excels that of his illustrious rival—but that he really had never opened his eyes to the extraordinary beauties of the Philippics, without fully studying which I conceive no one can have an adequate idea of the perfection of Demosthenean eloquence, there being some passages of fierce and indignant invective more terrible in those speeches than any that are to be found in the Ctesiphon itself. Of this opinion was Lord Wellesley himself ultimately; and I believe he derived fully more pleasure of late years than he had ever done before from his readings of those grand productions.

Upon this admirable foundation, and with the pure and chastened taste which he thus had to direct his efforts, he could well erect a fine superstructure. For he had a fervent animation, a great poetic force, a mind full of sensibilities, a nature warm and affectionate; and the clearness of his understanding enabled him both to state facts and

to employ arguments with entire success to a refined audience : in the proceedings of none other did he ever take a part. His powers of composition were great ; and he adopted the true method of acquiring the faculty of debating, as well as of excelling *in* oratory,—he studied his speeches carefully, and frequently committed his thoughts to writing. But he had no mean talent for declamation. In the Irish Parliament he attached himself to the party of Mr. Grattan, then in the midst of his glorious struggle for the independence of his country. That great man quickly estimated his value ; and remained affectionately attached to him through life, although they were thrown afterwards into opposite parties. On removing to England he became a member of our House of Commons, where he was uniformly connected with Mr. Pitt, by private friendship as well as similarity of opinions ; and when the French Revolution, and the principles propagated by it in this country, threatened the subversion of our mixed government, and the trial of the most perilous of all experiments, a pure democracy in a country unprepared for self-government, the talents of Lord Wellesley shone forth in a powerful resistance to the menacing torrent.

The great speech which he delivered in January, 1794, upon the enormities of the French Revolution and the impossibility of making peace with their authors and directors, made an extraordinary

impression at the time. It was, indeed, the most striking and masterly exposition which had ever been presented of the subject; and it went so elaborately into the details of the whole case, that the attacks made by his opponents consisted mainly of likening it to a treatise or a book. The value of such a piece is to be estimated by regarding it as a whole, and not by particular passages. It has the highest merit as a luminous and impressive statement, accompanied by sound reasoning on the facts disclosed, and animated appeals to the feelings they were calculated to excite. The texture of the whole is artistly woven; and the transitions are happy and natural. To give any samples of such qualities would manifestly be impossible. But the peroration may be read with admiration:—

"All the circumstances of your situation are now before you. You are now to make your option; you are now to decide whether it best becomes the dignity, the wisdom, and the spirit of a great nation, to rely for her existence on the arbitrary will of a restless and implacable enemy, or on her own sword. You are now to decide whether you will intrust to the valour and skill of British fleets and British armies, to the approved faith and united strength of your numerous and powerful allies, the defence of the limited monarchy of these realms, of the constitution of parliament, of all the established ranks and orders of society among us, of the

sacred rights of property, and of the whole frame of our laws, our liberties, and our religion; or whether you will deliver over the guardianship of all these blessings to the justice of Cambon, the plunderer of the Netherlands, who, to sustain the baseless fabric of his depreciated assignats, defrauds whole nations of their rights of property, and mortgages the aggregate wealth of Europe ;— to the moderation of Danton, who first promulgated that unknown law of nature which ordains that the Alps, the Pyrenees, the Ocean, and the Rhine should be the only boundaries of the French dominions ;—to the religion of Robespierre, whose practice of piety is the murder of his own sovereign, who exhorts all mankind to embrace the same faith, and to assassinate their kings for the honour of God ;—to the friendship of Barrère, who avows in the face of all Europe that the fundamental article of the revolutionary government of France is the ruin and annihilation of the British empire ;—or, finally, to whatever may be the accidental caprice of any new band of malefactors, who, in the last convulsions of their exhausted country, may be destined to drag the present tyrants to their own scaffolds, to seize their lawless power, to emulate the depravity of their example, and to rival the enormity of their crimes."

It is, however, not as an orator that this eminent person must be regarded ; for, before he had attained

the height which he was destined to reach in Parliament, he was sent out to govern our Indian dominions. His administration of that great empire, unparalleled in history, the wisdom of his councils, his promptitude of execution, his rare combination of the highest qualities of the statesman, whether in peace or war, the "*consulto*" united with the "*mature facto*,"* and the brilliant success which crowned all his operations, furnish not merely matter of interesting reflection, but of most useful instruction to all succeeding rulers. Nor can anything be more fortunate than the access which the publication of his "Dispatches" has given to the whole conduct of his splendid administration. It becomes, therefore, a duty of the historian who would record its annals to dwell somewhat in detail upon these things, for the sake of the valuable lessons which a study of them is fitted to impart. To this I shall now proceed; and it is an additional inducement to the work, that we thus shall have an opportunity of nearly observing the character and conduct of by far the most considerable of the statesmen whom the east has in modern times produced—Tippoo Sultan.

It is necessary that we should first of all examine the position of the British power in India with respect to its neighbours, or, what amounts to

* "Nam primum opus est consulto; et ubi consulueris, opus est mature facto."—SALLUST.

nearly the same thing, the force with which it had to cope, and by which it might expect to be assailed; in a word, the balance of power in the peninsula when Lord Wellesley assumed the government. We must therefore begin by shortly considering in what state the events of 1791 and 1792 had left it.

The general outline of Indian affairs is sufficiently familiar to most readers. Whether for good or for evil to this country men have doubted, and may still dispute—whether for good or for evil to the natives of India, now that the exaggerations of oratory and the distortions of party ingenuity have been forgotten, no man of ordinary understanding can raise any question—a footing had been at first slowly acquired, afterwards rapidly extended, by Great Britain in the Indian peninsula, and was maintained by a small numerical force of our countrymen, but with the consent, at least the entire submission, of a vast body of the people, and with the concurrence and the help of many native powers, whose hostility among themselves we had turned to our advantage with great skill, and with pretty uniform success. It had long ceased to be a question whether or not this empire could be abandoned. Humanity towards our native subjects and our allies, as well as justice towards our own countrymen, forbade all thoughts of that description, even at times when there seemed a very general impression among our rival statesmen

that the East Indian patronage was productive of such peril to the constitution of the government at home, and the whole subject of Indian affairs was beset with such inextricable difficulties, as justified a wish that we had never set foot on the banks of the Ganges. To continue in the same position, and to abstain from all extension of a dominion already enormous, was therefore the only kind of moderation to which recourse could be had; and it is hardly necessary to observe, that even this was a resolve much easier to make than to keep by. For, suppose ever so fixed a purpose to be entertained, that no consideration should tempt us to increase our dominions, no man could maintain such a resolution inflexibly in all circumstances, and indeed least of all in the very event most likely to happen, namely, of some neighbouring state, after having greatly increased its force, attacking us, or overpowering our allies, or even only menacing us, and endangering our existence, should no measures be adopted of a counteracting tendency. In truth, we had gotten into a position from which, as it was impossible to retire, so was it not by any means within our own power to determine whether we should stand still in it or advance; and it might happen that the only choice was a total abandonment of our dominion, or an extension of its boundaries. No doubt such an argument as this is liable to great abuse; it has often been

employed to justify acts of glaring national wrong. But everything depends upon the circumstances in which it is urged, and the particulars of the case to which it is applied. Nor is it now stated with any reference to Lord Wellesley's proceedings in 1798 and 1799; these rest upon wholly different grounds. The present purpose is to explain the conduct of Lord Cornwallis ten years before; and it can hardly be denied that he was left without a choice as to the course he should take, and that the war and the treaty which closed it were rather to be regarded as necessary measures of self-defence, than acts of aggression and of conquest. That they were so considered, that they were defended upon this ground, there can be no doubt; for although reference was made to the attacks by Tippoo upon our ally the Rajah of Travancore, it is quite clear that this alone did not justify the course which we pursued. The first attack had been repulsed: Tippoo had not repudiated our interference, but, on the contrary, had set up a claim of right, grounded on what we ourselves distinctly admitted to be a gross misconduct of the Rajah; and, before the second attack, the Rajah had, in fact, become the aggressor, by invading the Mysore camp. Besides, if our whole object was to defend our ally, the success which early attended our operations had enabled us to attain that end with ease; and we derived no right

from any such consideration to continue the war, as we did, for three years, refusing all offers of the enemy, and only consenting to make peace under the walls of his capital upon the terms of his giving up one-half of his dominions. But the true defence of our proceedings, and that which was by no means kept back at the time, was the dangerous policy of the enemy—the resources at his command, and which he had shown in the clearest manner a fixed determination to employ, first against our allies, and then against ourselves—the imminent hazard to which our existence in the East was exposed as long as such power remained in the hands of a chief bent upon using it to our destruction. Indeed, the principal ground of complaint against the war was much less its injustice than its impolicy; the view taken of our interest in those parts being that which, twenty years before (in 1770), had been sanctioned by the authority of some of the local governments, namely, the expediency of acting with the Sultan of Mysore against the Mahrattas, and regarding the latter as the more formidable adversary; a view which may fairly be said to have become as obsolete in 1790, and as ill suited to the altered circumstances of the times, as the policy of Queen Elizabeth with respect to the Spanish crown would have been at the same period in the management of our European concerns.

We may remark further upon that war, the strong testimony in its favour derived from the bare fact of Lord Cornwallis having been its promoter. The justly venerated name of that prudent and virtuous statesman affords a kind of security for the integrity, and, above all, for the moderation of any line of conduct which had the sanction of his adoption. His Indian administration, so far from having ever been deemed any exception to his well-established character, was admitted by politicians of all classes, at a time when party ran highest upon the affairs of the East, to have been so exemplary, that his last appointment, in 1805, to be Governor-General was the source of universal contentment in England, as well as India; and his loss, which so soon followed, was by all parties regarded as a great public calamity. When it is considered that such was the deliberate and unanimous opinion of our statesmen regarding the course formerly pursued by this excellent person, after so long a time had been given for reflection, and such ample opportunity afforded of learning lessons from experience; and above all, when this opinion was entertained at the very moment that the controversy raged the most vehemently upon the more recent measures of Lord Wellesley, there seems no escaping the conclusion that an unhesitating judgment was pronounced in favour of the policy pursued in 1789 and the two following

years; and, for the reasons already referred to, this judgment could only be rested upon the necessities of our situation in the East, with relation to the Mysore, its ruler, and our allies.

The peculiar circumstances which made Tippoo so formidable a neighbour are known to most readers. He ruled with absolute power over a highly fertile and populous country, of near two hundred thousand square miles in extent; from whence he raised a revenue of five millions sterling a-year, and an army of 150,000 men. Although the latter were very inferior in effective force to European troops, the revenue was equal to thrice as much in this country; and it was accumulating yearly in a treasure ready for the emergencies of war, while his soldiers were rapidly improving in discipline, and becoming every day more fit to meet ours upon equal terms. To his artillery he had given the greatest attention, and he had so formed his corps of gunners and elephants, that he could move a train of a hundred guns to any point with a rapidity unequalled in those countries by any other power. To these great elements of strength must be added the daring, subtle, and politic nature of the man, one of the most remarkable that have appeared in modern times. His ferocious tyranny to his own subjects; his cruel delight in religious persecution, which increased his power with the other bigots of his own per-

suasion; his inextinguishable hatred of the English, whom he had from his cradle been taught to regard as the implacable enemies of his family—these, though they undoubtedly form dark features in his character, augmented rather than lessened his influence in the peninsula, and made him an object of terror to all whom admiration of his better qualities—his valour, perseverance, address, and patriotism—might fail to captivate. Although his fierce Mussulman zeal alienated him from all Christian nations, yet did his still fiercer animosity against the English so far conquer or assuage his fanaticism as to make him court whatever power was hostile to our interests; and accordingly his constant endeavour was to gain the friendship and co-operation of France, from which he expected to derive the means of working our overthrow, and indeed of exterminating the British name in the East. On the eve of the Revolution he had sent a great embassy to Paris, with the view of forming an alliance for offensive purposes; and one of the ministers of Louis XVI. (Bertrand de Molleville) has declared that a most tempting proposal was made to the servants of that unfortunate prince in 1791, with great secrecy, and which they were disposed to receive favourably; but that Louis regretted too much the consequences of his former interference in our colonial affairs, and was then too bitterly reaping the fruits of it, to embark again in similar

enterprises, even supposing that the internal state of his dominions had left him the option.

There can, I conceive, be no manner of doubt that the war of 1789 with this powerful and implacable enemy, though it effected a mighty diminution of his strength, yet left him more rancorous than ever in his hatred, and sufficiently strong to be regarded still as by far our most formidable neighbour. The cession of half his territories to the Company and its allies, the Nizam and the Mahrattas, had been extorted from him by main force, when many of his principal fortresses were taken, his capital closely invested, and an assault impending, the issue of which the preceding successes of our troops before the place made no longer doubtful. Yet so bitter was the cup then held to his lips, that even in his extremity he flew back from it, broke off the treaty, after two of his three eldest sons had been given into our hands as hostages, and prepared for a last effort of desperate resistance—when, finding that it was too late—that our position made the fall of Seringapatam inevitable, and that his utter destruction was the certain consequence of further refusal, he agreed to whatever was demanded, and, in the uttermost bitterness of spirit, suddenly signed the instrument. Such a personage, in such a frame of mind, though stripped of half his dominions, was very certain to turn the remainder into means of more persevering

annoyance, and only to desire life that he might, on some future day, slake his thirst of vengeance. The country which he retained was full of strong places, and bordered upon our dominions in the Carnatic by so many passes that Madras could hardly ever be reckoned secure from his attack. His territory was centrally situated, between our settlements upon the two coasts, so as to command the line that joined them. He still possessed his capital, a place of prodigious strength, and which he could again fortify as he had done before. His despotic power placed the whole resources of a rich country at his absolute disposal, and the six years that followed the peace of Seringapatam were actively employed in preparing for that revenge which, ever since the disasters of 1792, had been burning in his breast. This is what might naturally have been expected, and it was certainly found to have taken place. But the course of events had still further favoured his designs. The dissensions among the other native princes, and rebellions in the dominions of some, had greatly reduced their strength, while his kingdom had enjoyed a profound peace; and, unfortunately for the English interest, our chief ally, the Nizam, had been so much reduced in his strength and reputation by a disastrous war with the Peishwah, and by a very disgraceful peace which he had been compelled to make, that, as regarded our relative position, the Mysore might be almost said to have gained whatever had been lost

to the Deccan. The state of affairs in France, too, had materially changed since 1791. There was no longer the same indisposition to engage in schemes of Indian aggression; and, although our superiority at sea made the arrival of French auxiliaries extremely difficult, it clearly appears that, before the expedition to Egypt, and independently of any hopes which he might build upon its successful issue, or upon the permanent establishment of the French in that country, Tippoo had entered into communication with the government of the Mauritius, for the purpose of furthering his favourite design of obtaining their assistance to revenge himself upon the English settlements. The resort of French officers to his service had long placed at his disposal able engineers, as well as other military men: and his troops never were in so high a state of discipline, nor his army so well appointed in all respects.

But it was not merely in his own dominions that he had important help to expect from his French connexions. Other native princes had adopted the same policy, and our ally, the Nizam, more than any. He had a corps of 1500 men under M. Raymond, a French commander, who had served in the war of 1789, and this had since been increased to above 10,000, the officers of which were almost all French, and partook of the exasperation which unhappily at that time prevailed between the two countries—using every endeavour to undermine our influence

at Hyderabad, and so little to be relied on in case of their services being required by our ally against Tippoo, that he might rather reckon upon them as friends than prepare to meet their hostility. Some alarm had been felt upon this head in the campaign of 1792; and although at that time the corps of Raymond was comparatively insignificant in amount, it had nevertheless been deemed, even then, necessary to make the Nizam take into his pay two other corps, one under an Irish, the other under an American officer, to serve as counterpoises to the French, upon the supposition that in the latter Tippoo had natural allies. In 1798, the Irishman's battalion remained at Hyderabad, but numbered no more than 800 men; the American's had been disbanded, and had passed into the service of the Mahrattas; Raymond's, which had increased so much that it formed the bulk of the Nizam's army, was ordered by him to be still further reinforced, and carried to 14,000. It was recruited, in the proportion of a third of its number, from our territories in the Carnatic, and by desertion from our regiments; no pains were spared by its officers to promote this spirit whenever its detachments were near the Madras frontier; and a constant correspondence was maintained by it with the French troops in Mysore. Its influence on the court of Hyderabad was so great as to alarm that minister of the Nizam who was more than the

rest in the interest of England. Finally, Tippoo looked to an invasion of our northern provinces, and those of our Mahratta allies, by Zemaun Shah, the sovereign of Caubul, with whom he had opened a communication, and who had recently succeeded, with but little opposition, in penetrating as far as Lahore, where he was stopped by some dissensions having broken out in his own dominions. The state of our affairs in Oude rendered that province a source of weakness, and compelled us to maintain an extraordinary force there. The Mahrattas had been extremely weakened by quarrels among themselves; and their chief state, that under the Peishwah, had been so crippled by a succession of internal revolutions, that in the event of aid being required against Mysore, little prospect was held out of any effectual co-operation from this quarter; while there, as in every court of India, the intrigues of Tippoo had been unremittingly employed to undermine our influence, and to stir up direct hostility against us.

It was in this state of affairs that Lord Wellesley assumed the government of India. He arrived at the Cape of Good Hope, on his way out, in February, 1798. He deemed it expedient to open the India-House dispatches, which he met on their passage to Europe; and he found at the Cape, by a fortunate accident, Major Kirkpatrick, a gentleman of great experience and ability, and

who had been the British resident both at the court of the Nizam and of Scindiah. The information which Lord Wellesley received regarding the state of Indian politics from him, and from the dispatches, appears to have immediately laid the foundation of the opinions which he acted upon throughout the difficult crisis that ensued. Indeed, there is nothing more remarkable in these transactions than the statements which he transmitted from the Cape. He evidently had there made up his mind upon the line of policy which it was fitting to pursue, in order to restore the British influence among the native powers, to emancipate our allies there from French influence, and to place them in circumstances that might enable them to maintain their independence and fulfil their engagements with us. The first and most important of his operations when he arrived in India—the one, indeed, which enabled him to attempt all the rest—was the reduction of the corps of Raymond; and we find in the dispatches from the Cape a very distinct statement of the necessity of this operation, and of his determination to substitute for Raymond's corps an additional British force, and resolutely to prevent its increase until that substitution could be enforced. The general outline of the policy which he afterwards pursued with respect to other powers is also very plainly sketched in these memorable dispatches from the Cape; and, as far

as regarded Tippoo, although at the time no information had reached Lord Wellesley or the Government of any acts of hostility, or even of any preparations for a rupture, the course of conduct fit to be held with respect to him is pointed out distinctly.—"My ideas on this subject," says his Lordship, "are, that as on the one hand we ought *never to use any high language towards Tippoo, nor ever attempt to deny him the smallest point of his just rights*, so, on the other, where we have distinct proofs of his machinations against us, we ought to let him know that his treachery does not escape our observation, and to make him feel that he is within the reach of our vigilance.—At present it appears to me that he is permitted to excite ill-will against us wherever he pleases, without the least attempt on our part to reprehend either him for the suggestion, or the Court, to whom he applies, for listening to it."*

Lord Wellesley proceeded from the Cape to Madras, where he remained some weeks, in order to superintend the execution of the measures directed to be pursued with respect to a change in the sovereignty of Tanjore. But it subsequently

* It is a remarkable, and I believe an unexampled circumstance, showing how accurately Lord Wellesley's opinions and plans were formed, that whole pages of his Minute, 12th August, at Calcutta, explaining his views, after they were perfected by a six months' residence in the country, are taken from the letters written by him at the Cape in February!

appears that this visit was of material use in giving him an accurate view of the character, talents, and dispositions of the principal persons concerned in the government of that presidency. There are few more striking documents among his dispatches than the letter containing an account of these persons which he sent to Lord Clive (afterwards Lord Powis), the new governor, soon after his arrival; and there can be no doubt that Lord Wellesley's personal observation of the individuals led him at once to detect the quarter from whence an attempt afterwards proceeded to thwart his designs, and enabled him to counteract and to frustrate that attempt. Having incidentally adverted to this topic, it is fit that justice should be rendered to the conduct of the two principal persons at that station—Lord Clive and General Harris. No one can rise from a perusal of the Indian correspondence without forming a very high opinion of the admirable good sense, and steady resolution to sacrifice all private feelings to the interests of the service, which guided the whole conduct both of the governor and commander-in-chief. Both of them appear at once to have felt and obeyed the influence of a superior mind when the plans of Lord Wellesley were unfolded to them. His firmness, indeed, his confidence in his own resources, and his determination to carry through his own measures, were tempered on all occasions by the

greatest urbanity and kindness of demeanour towards those coadjutors. Nevertheless, persons of less good sense, and less devoted to the discharge of their duty, would have been apt to make difficulties upon occasions when serious hazards were to be encountered, and men of a mean disposition, and a contracted understanding, would not have failed to play the part in which such persons commonly excel, prompted by envy, or even a preposterous jealousy, where the utter absence of all equality makes it ridiculous—that of carping, and complaining, and repining, and creating difficulties; whereas those able and useful servants of the state showed as much zeal in executing the Governor-General's plan as if all his measures had been their own.

About the beginning of June, soon after his arrival at Calcutta, Lord Wellesley received intelligence of a proclamation having been issued at the Mauritius by General Malartic, the French governor, and was furnished with a copy of that document. In the course of a fortnight its authenticity was proved beyond all doubt; and its importance was unquestionable. It announced the arrival of ambassadors from Tippoo; his offer to the Executive Directory of an alliance, offensive and defensive, against the English power; his demand of assistance; and his engagement to declare war as soon as it should arrive, for the purpose of

expelling us from India; and it called upon the inhabitants of the colony to form a force, which should be transported to Mysore, and taken into the Sultan's service. It was ascertained that the ambassadors had given the most positive assurances in their master's name of his determination to act as the proclamation stated—had obtained the aid of a certain inconsiderable number of French officers and men—had returned with these in a French ship of war—and had presented them to Tippoo, who immediately took them into his service, having also received the ambassadors on their arrival with marks of distinction. His army was known to be on the footing of a war-establishment; that is to say, it was constantly in the field, excepting in the monsoon season, and amounted to between 70,000 and 80,000 men, beside a numerous and well-appointed artillery; and the discipline of the infantry, in particular, had been of late very carefully improved. His treachery, exceeding even the measure of perfidy proverbially common to Eastern courts, had been displayed in the letters sent to the Government at Calcutta, both before Lord Wellesley's arrival, and also to himself, some of them on the very day when proceedings were taken in the negotiations with France. His intrigues with the native courts, and with Zemaun Shah, had likewise been discovered; and they all pointed to the same object—the attack of our

settlements the moment he was ready and saw any prospect of success.

In these circumstances Lord Wellesley's determination was immediately taken, to attack him without delay, unless he gave such ample security as should preclude all risk from his aggression when his plans should be matured, and he should receive the further assistance which he expected—security which there was little, if any, reason to suppose he would agree to, after the agonies he had experienced from his losses in the last war. The plan which his Lordship had formed, in the event of hostilities, was to seize the Sultan's portion of the Malabar coast, by marching one army from Bombay; to move another force from the Carnatic upon Seringapatam; and thus compel him both to give up that part of his dominions which enabled him to maintain his intercourse with France, and to dismiss all French officers and men from his service; to receive residents from us and from our allies, which he had, for obvious reasons, uniformly persisted in refusing; and to defray the expenses of the war. But upon examining the condition of the Company's resources, both military and financial, it was found quite impossible to undertake these operations so as to finish the war in one campaign. The Bombay establishment might, though with difficulty, have been able to bear its share of them; but that of Madras, on which the greater movement

depended, was so crippled as to make it impossible for a sufficient force to march upon Seringapatam. Of ultimate success Lord Wellesley entertained no doubt; but he wisely judged that it would be unjustifiable in every view to undertake a war which could not, to a reasonable certainty, be finished within the season.

And now let me claim the reader's best attention, while I endeavour to lay before him a sketch of that admirable combination of means by which the whole plan was not only successfully executed the next year, but by which its success appears to have been rendered as nearly a matter of absolute certainty as anything in politics and in war can be. It will be seen that the designs of Tippoo were met and counteracted, and even the possibilities of his defeating our schemes were prevented by the adoption of a systematic course of policy in almost every quarter of India, in the native courts as well as in our own settlements; that he was, as it were, surrounded in all directions, so as to cut off each chance of escape; that he was guarded against in every avenue by which he might assail us, so as to be deprived of all means of offence; that wherever he turned to intrigue against us, there he found our agents on the watch, and our influence fortified—wherever common interests or common feelings gave him a prospect of succour, there a watchful and provident care had neutralized those natural

advantages—wherever actual hostility to us had made ready for him some coadjutor, there a timely vigour, there a clear perception of the end, a determined will in choosing the means, and the prompt and unflinching use of them, paralysed his expected ally, if it failed to make him an enemy.

And first of all, in order to estimate the merits of the policy which we are going to survey, it is requisite that a clear idea be formed of the object in view. It was to reduce the Sultan's power, by taking advantage next year of the cause of war already given by him, unless he could be made, in the mean time, to give the satisfaction and security required. But the army on the Madras establishment was incapable of defending that territory, much more of acting against Mysore. The funded debt of the Company had trebled within a few years, and their credit was so low, that eight per cent. paper was at a discount of eighteen and twenty per cent.; and even twelve per cent. paper at a discount of four. The Nizam and the Peishwah were our two allies, bound to act with us against the Sultan. But the former, as we have seen, was reduced to a state almost of insignificance, and was in the hands of a military force favourable to Tippoo. The latter was still more crippled, and had a victorious rival in possession of the chief part of his territory, with an army which had subdued him. I allude to Scindiah, who had for a

considerable time left his own country situated in the north, between the Jumna and the Nerbudda, and taken post at Poonah, the Peishwah's capital. Then it became part of Lord Wellesley's object, and without which the rest must fail, to restore those two powers to independence, and make the aid of one, if not both, available to us, while neither should be suffered to act against us. Again, Scindiah himself was accessible to Tippoo's arts, and over him some check must be provided. It was indeed found that both he and the Peishwah were secretly hostile to us; and Scindiah, in particular, was in negotiation with the deposed Nabob of Oude, to overthrow our influence in the north, by restoring that prince, and dethroning the Nabob Vizir, whom we had raised to the throne. Next, there was the threatened invasion of Zemaun Shah, who had prepared to cross the Attock, and was within six weeks' march of Delhi, maintaining by correspondence a friendly intercourse with Tippoo, and little likely to be opposed either by the Seiks or the Mahrattas. It became necessary, therefore, to secure the north against this double danger, both from the Shah and from Scindiah; from the former, if Scindiah remained in the Deccan, abandoning his own dominions to the invader; from the latter, if the Shah either retreated or was repulsed by the Mahratta power. Add to all these difficulties, that which appears to have greatly disconcerted Lord

Wellesley at one moment, the prevailing despondency of leading men at Madras, who had formed so exaggerated an estimate of the danger attending a rupture with Mysore, through a recollection of what the Carnatic had formerly suffered from its proximity to the enemy, and had so lively a feeling of the weakness of their present establishment, that they arrived at a very singular and unfortunate opinion. They maintained that no preparation, even of a prospective nature—no increase, even of the means of defence—should be attempted, because no activity of exertion could enable them to resist the enemy, and any appearance of arming would only draw down upon them an immediate invasion.

Lord Wellesley's first proceeding was to put down with a strong hand the resistance which he met with on the part of those who held this extraordinary doctrine, and whose argument, as he most justly showed, against the prudence of preparing for defence, would become stronger every day as Tippoo's hostile preparations advanced, until at length we should be reduced to the alternative either of implicit submission, or of being destroyed when and how the Sultan pleased. He therefore directed the army to be assembled in the Carnatic without delay; he showed in what consisted the want of efficiency complained of, and applied the remedy, by giving directions to alter the system of supplying draught cattle; he directed the proper

stores for a campaign to be prepared and established on the Mysore frontier; he made the European troops be moved to garrisons in the same quarter, while the native forces should be collected in the field, and ready to act in case of invasion; and he dispatched a supply of specie from Bengal, together with such force of soldiers and marines as could be immediately spared. The resistance offered at Madras was met with temper, but with perfect firmness, by the Governor in Council at Calcutta.—"If," say they, after referring to the remonstrances of the Council at Madras, "if we thought it proper to enter with you into any discussion of the policy of our late orders, we might refer you to the records of your own government, which furnish more than one example of the fatal consequences of neglecting to keep pace with the forwardness of the enemy's equipments, and of resting the defence of the Carnatic, in such a crisis as the present, on any other security than a state of early and active preparation for war. But *being resolved to exclude all such discussions from the correspondence of the two governments*, we shall only repeat our confidence in your zealous and speedy execution of those parts of the public service which fall within the direct line of your peculiar duty."

Lord Wellesley, while this correspondence proceeded, had carried on the operation of most im-

portance in his foreign policy—the restoring and improving our relations with the Nizam and the Peishwah. Nothing could be more signal than the success of this policy as regarded the Nizam, and it proved the hinge upon which all his subsequent measures turned. By negotiations with that prince and his minister, admirably planned, and ably conducted through Major Kirkpatrick, a treaty was concluded for increasing the English subsidiary force, and disbanding the corps formerly commanded by Raymond, and since his death (which had lately happened) by Piron. It was part of this treaty that the French officers and men should be sent to Europe by the Company, and that no Frenchman should again be taken into the Nizam's service. But the consent of the corps itself was to be obtained ; and it is needless to add, that his Lordship's design was to have that without asking for it. Accordingly, while the negotiation was going on, the additional subsidiary force of three thousand men was moved to the Guntoor Circar, a portion of the Deccan ceded to the Company in 1778, and which lies near to Hyderabad, the capital of the Nizam. This force, as soon as the treaty was signed, marched to Hyderabad, and was joined by two thousand of the Nizam's cavalry. A mutiny having broken out in the French corps, advantage was judiciously taken of this to surround and disarm it, which was effected without any

bloodshed. The greatest courtesy and kindness were shown towards the officers, who were immediately embarked with all their property (their arrears of pay having been settled through the intervention of the English resident), and sent first to Calcutta, and afterwards to France, not being treated as prisoners of war. This most important proceeding at once gave a new aspect to our affairs in the peninsula. The Nizam was restored to independence, and became our firm friend; his power was materially increased; for Lord Wellesley's protection of him against the Peishwah and Scindiah, if it did not enable him to resume that station which he had lost since the war of 1795, yet gave him the means of effectually aiding the contemplated operations, and secured him from the possibility of becoming a prey either to Tippoo or his coadjutors. But the effect of the change at Hyderabad was not confined to the Deccan—it was felt all over India, and in our own settlements as well as at the native courts. The confidence in Lord Wellesley which it at once inspired gave a vigour to his government which the mere possession of power never can bestow, especially where political as well as military operations are required; for absolute command may extort implicit obedience, but the exertion of men's faculties, their abilities as well as their courage, can only be fully secured by filling them with zealous devotion to

their superior. The Governor-General had the choice of excellent agents among the able men educated in the Company's service; he pitched upon those who best deserved his confidence; he gave it them freely; and their entire reliance both upon his capacity and upon his support called forth their most strenuous exertions on every occasion.

It must certainly be ascribed chiefly to the change effected at Hyderabad, that he was enabled to prevent any unfavourable proceedings either on the Peishwah's part or on Scindiah's; for their intentions were of the most hostile nature.* The negotiations carried on with them for the purpose of preventing any junction with Tippoo, and maintaining peace between them and the Nizam, were successful. But Scindiah could not be prevailed upon to quit the Deccan and return to his own dominions; nor would the Peishwah so far break with Mysore as to dismiss the Sultan's ambassadors. The influence acquired at Hyderabad, and a force prepared at Bombay to assist either the

* Considerable assistance was derived from a change in the ministry at Poonah, brought about mainly by our influence. But though Nana Furnavese, who was restored to power, was uniformly our friend, his master's disposition underwent no change; and after Lord Wellesley had peremptorily refused his proffered mediation, he was discovered to have taken measures for joining Tippoo, but they were, by our demonstrations, referred to in the text, delayed until the fall of that tyrant approached too close to make any connection with him safe.

Peishwah or Scindiah against the other, should hostilities break out between them, and to counteract both should they join against the Nizam, maintained the existing state of things until the disturbances in Scindiah's own country, and the discontents in the army he commanded, reduced his power to insignificance; and thus the whole military operations against Mysore were carried on ultimately without any interruption from either of those chiefs.

In addition to the holds over Scindiah, which have just been mentioned, the threatened invasion of Zemaun Shah afforded another. In order to protect the northern frontier, it became necessary to send a large force, under Sir J. Craig, into the field, which remained on the frontiers of Oude until the Shah retired from the Seik's country, which he had approached. This force was continued on the same line during the critical state of affairs in the south; and it had, no doubt, a powerful effect upon Scindiah, whose dominions lay exposed to it, had he made any hostile movement in the Deccan. The Rajah of Berar borders upon Scindiah on another line, the south-eastern side. Accordingly, negotiations were at the same time commenced with that prince, for the establishment of a defensive alliance, in case of Scindiah breaking the peace.

We thus perceive the great basis of the whole

operations of Lord Wellesley. The Nizam was emancipated and became an efficient ally.—The Peishwah was secured either as an ally or a neutral by the change effected at Hyderabad, and a demonstration on the side of Bombay.—Scindiah, whose power was much more formidable at first than the Peishwah's, and who was not bound to us by the same obligations of treaty, was not merely kept in check by the same two holds which Lord Wellesley had over the Court of Poonah, but he was further restrained by the movements in Oude, on one of his frontiers, and the arrangements with Berar on another.

That no quarter of the peninsula might be neglected, while every security was taken for the success of his operations against Mysore, Lord Wellesley sent a resident to the Rajah of Travancore, a prince of comparatively small power, but whose position on the south-western frontier of the Sultan made it expedient to obtain his co-operation, and at any rate to watch his proceedings. Material assistance was also to be derived from him in the important department of the conveyance of the two armies, as from Travancore the communication was equally easy with the Malabar and Coromandel coasts.

The arrangements which we have been examining were carried on at first from Calcutta, where the Governor-General remained until his measures had reached a certain point of maturity. But he

wisely deemed it expedient, after this, to be upon the spot, that he might superintend the execution, which now approached, of his plan. Indeed, his departure from Calcutta might have been deferred some time longer, but for the experience which he had had of the resistance to him among certain of the authorities at Madras. This had not been confined to the original order for assembling the army, already adverted to. His proceeding at Hyderabad had been very coldly seconded, and he even thought had been thwarted by the same parties; for when he directed the subsidiary force to be prepared, and sent into the Guntoor Circar—a movement upon which the whole depended—he was met by remonstrances, instead of being supported by zealous endeavours; and he complained of a delay which might have proved fatal in the execution of that order, and which did defer the successful issue of the plan. His Lordship's words, in writing to General Harris upon this subject, evinced at once his strong sense of the treatment he thought he had received, and his resolute determination to trample down all opposition. This dispatch also renders justice to that excellent officer, exempting him from all share in the blame:—"My letter of the 16th July will have informed you how essential a plan to the very existence of the British empire in India would have been defeated, if your honourable firmness had not overcome the suggestions of an

opposition which would have persuaded you to violate the law, under the specious pretence of executing the spirit, by disobeying the letter, of the orders of the Governor-General in Council. This opposition I am resolved to crush; I possess sufficient powers to do so; and I will exert those powers to the extreme point of their extent, rather than suffer the smallest particle of my plans for the public service to be frustrated by such unworthy means. With this view, my earnest request to you is that you will communicate to me, without delay, the names of those who have arrogated to themselves the power of governing the empire committed to my charge; the ignorance and weakness of this self-created government have already appeared to you from the papers which I transmitted to you on the 18th July."*

At the date of this letter, 19th August, the nego-

* There can be, I conceive, no doubt, and very possibly, upon a calm review of the whole affair, the Governor-General may have had as little, that those persons acted conscientiously in the discharge of what they conceived to be their duty. That they had fallen into a grievous error in their view of the policy fit to be pursued, has been stated more than once in the text: but not only may we acquit them of all fault beyond error in judgment—we may go further—and hold that their duty required them, acting under that error, to express strongly their opinion. They were persons of great respectability, and long and varied experience in Indian affairs. This certainly only increased their influence and augmented the difficulties of Lord Wellesley's position

tiations at Hyderabad had so far succeeded, mainly, no doubt, from the movement in the Guntoor Circar, as to show the short-sightness of the opposition in question; but the great event of the disarming did not take place until two months more had elapsed. Lord Clive had now arrived at Madras, and he took the most steady and zealous part in seconding the Governor-General. Nevertheless, the existence of an opinion altogether unfavourable to Lord Wellesley's power among men in authority, and whose great experience was likely to render their opposition embarrassing during the *regni novitas* of Lord Clive, though it should fail to shake his purpose, rendered the personal presence of the Governor-General highly desirable; and he accordingly removed to Madras at the end of December, and there established the seat of government, leaving the affairs of Bengal to be administered in his absence by the Commander-in-chief Sir A. Clarke and the rest of the Council. But although his arrival at Madras had the effect, by law, of superseding Lord Clive, he most properly took the first opportunity of making a declaration, in the form of a minute in Council, that he should not interfere in any respect in the peculiar affairs of the presidency, or in anything relating to its patronage, civil or military; but should confine himself to the general interests of the empire, and act with regard to these as if he had continued at Calcutta.

The occupation of Egypt by the French, which had taken place during the preceding summer, and the communication which Lord Wellesley immediately foresaw would be established between Bonaparte and Tippoo (and subsequent events* proved that he had conjectured rightly), induced him to direct Admiral Rainier's fleet to watch the Malabar coast with great care, so that all assistance from the Red Sea should be cut off as far as a naval force could effect this object; and in case any armament escaped the vigilance of the cruisers, the precautions taken on the coast by land must be relied on, and especially the operation of the Bombay army.

When the Sultan perceived that on all sides preparations were in a forward state against him, and found every native court occupied by Lord Wellesley's agents, he appears to have felt considerable alarm, though he carefully dissembled it for some time. A town and district had been some time before Lord Wellesley's arrival occupied by the Company, called Wynaad; Tippoo had made representations against this; it appeared to have originated in mistake; the subject was examined, and Lord Wellesley at once ordered it to be restored, without any equivalent. Some other unimportant disputes were by both parties agreed to be termi-

* Bonaparte's Letter to Tippoo was found some months afterwards on the taking of Seringapatam, with the other proofs of the Sultan's hostile proceedings.

nated by an amicable inquiry. But Lord Wellesley took the opportunity of this correspondence, as soon as his preparations were sufficiently advanced, to inform Tippoo that he was quite aware of his hostile proceedings at the Mauritius and elsewhere; that his Lordship's preparations had been made to repel any aggression which might be attempted; but that both he and his allies, being desirous of peace, were only anxious to place their relations with the Sultan upon a safe and distinctly understood footing; and, in order that this might be arranged, he required Tippoo to receive an ambassador, whom he named. This only produced an evasive answer, giving a ridiculously false explanation of the intercourse with the Mauritius, and putting aside the proposal of an embassy, but expressing boundless delight at the defeat of the French fleet by Lord Nelson, which Lord Wellesley had communicated to him, and applying to that nation every epithet of hatred and contempt, although it is now clearly ascertained that his despair on receiving the news of their defeat knew no bounds. Again Lord Wellesley urged the receiving of an ambassador, and no direct answer could be obtained, while preparations were actively making to increase every branch of the Mysore army.

At length Lord Wellesley transmitted to him on the 9th of January (1799) a letter, recapitulating his whole conduct and "once more calling upon

him, in the most serious and solemn manner, to assent to the admission of Major Doveton" (the ambassador), and earnestly requiring an answer within a day after the letter should reach him. Still the crafty Sultan gave no answer, though he continued his preparations; and on the 7th of February he dispatched a French officer as his ambassador to the Executive Directory, with a renewed proposition for an offensive and defensive alliance to make war jointly on the English, partition their territories, and expel them from India. At the same time with the dispatch of this mission, he at length sent an answer, in which he said he was going upon a hunting excursion, and that Major Doveton might come to him, but unattended.

It was, however, now too late; for on the 3rd of February (the Sultan's letter not arriving before the 13th) Lord Wellesley had ordered the army to march upon Seringapatam, and commence the siege without delay. Late, however, as the Sultan's consent to treat had been, and manifestly as it was designed only to gain time for his military preparations, and, above all, to postpone our attack until the season for operations, already far advanced, should be gone, Lord Wellesley directed General Harris, under whose command the army had marched some days before the answer arrived, to receive any ambassador whom Tippoo might send, and to treat upon the basis of his securing the Com-

pany and its allies, by abandoning the coast of Malabar, dismissing his French troops, and receiving residents from the Company and the Nizam. The instructions given to General Harris were not confined to the terms of the negotiation, but embraced the various contingencies which might happen, provided for almost every conceivable event, and only left that gallant and able officer his own proper province of leading on the army and superintending its operations. After the march was begun, and when on the eve of entering Mysore, the General received a final instruction of a most important description—he was on no account to conclude any treaty until a junction had been effected of the Madras and Bombay armies, and there was a fair prospect of successfully beginning the siege.

The General entered Mysore on the 5th March, with an army said to be better equipped than any that had ever taken the field in the Peninsula, and amounting to about 22,000 men, of whom between 5000 and 6000 were Europeans, the rest natives. The Nizam's army, consisting of the English subsidiary force of 6000, and 16,000 of his own troops, had some weeks before been moved to the Carnatic, and joined General Harris at Vellore, before he entered Tippoo's territory. The Bombay army, of about 7000, moved upon Seringapatam, from the opposite quarter; and, although unexpected delays

occurred during the march of the Madras army, occasioned chiefly by the failure of the cattle and the carriage department, in about four weeks the whole force reached Seringapatam, after encountering a comparatively slight opposition; one battle having been fought by each army—both, though successful, yet by no means decisive. It is well known that the Duke of Wellington, then Colonel Wellesley, commanded a brigade in this memorable expedition, and distinguished himself by that great military capacity which has since, on a far wider theatre, shone forth with such extraordinary lustre. He was also placed by his brother at the head of a commission, judiciously formed for the purpose of conducting, under General Harris's authority, and in constant communication with him as well as with the government, all political operations during the advance of the army, as well as during the siege, and after its successful termination.

Never, perhaps, was an operation more complete in all its parts than this brilliant campaign. In a month Seringapatam was taken; the Sultan falling while fighting in its defence with his wonted valour, now heightened by despair. All his chief captains submitted to the conquerors; and the Rajah of Mysore, whose family had been dethroned by the usurpation of Tippoo's father, and were detained captive, and subjected to every ignominious treatment by the cruel tyrants, was called

to the throne of a portion of their former dominions, the rest being divided among the Company, the Nizam, and the Peishwah. There were found at Seringapatam papers confirming beyond a doubt the inferences respecting his hostile designs, drawn from Malartic's proclamation and the embassy to the Mauritius. But at the same time the correspondence shows the deep perfidy which formed so remarkable a feature in the character of this Eastern tyrant. An inextinguishable hatred of England breathes through the whole, animates the mass, and mixes itself with the great body of the documents. This was plainly sincere. But his attachment to the French Directory may not have been quite so real, excepting in so far as they were the enemies of his foes. In addressing the "Citizens Representatives" he is ready to "acknowledge the sublimity of the new French Constitution," and he offers its chiefs "alliance and fraternity." But this does not prevent him from writing at the same time to the Grand Signor and testifying "his boundless satisfaction on learning that the Turk is about to free his regions (Egypt) from the contamination of those shameless tribes" (the French), or from exhorting him, "by word and deed, to repel those abandoned infidels."

In surveying the operations of the war, however, and in comparing the Sultan's conduct of it with that of the campaigns in 1789, 90, and 91, we can

hardly avoid being struck with the inferior vigour and resources displayed by him upon the present occasion. His troops were better disciplined; his own courage and theirs was as high as ever; nor was there any want of disposition to contest every inch of ground. Yet whether it be from the greatness of the force brought to bear upon him; or from his chagrin at having failed in his attempts to put off the invasion till the monsoon should set in; or from the discomfiture of all his plans to obtain the help of the native powers, and the disappointment of his hopes of French assistance—certain it is, that we see none of those rapid and daring movements which more than once, in the former contest, reduced our chances of victory to the possibility of escape, and made our final success appear anything rather than a matter of certain calculation.

The conduct of the Mahratta war and of the expeditions against Scindiah and Holkar was marked by the same great capacity which had shone forth in the conquest of the Mysore. Those hostilities also offered an opportunity to the Marquess's brother of displaying the transcendent talents which have since been exhibited with such surpassing lustre—the talents of a great statesman not less than of a great captain. But the part of Lord Wellesley's policy which chiefly excited opposition in England was the subsidiary treaties

which he formed with several powerful princes, and by which the important dominions of Arcot, Oude, the Nizam, and the Peishwah were placed under a real subordination to the English government. The perfidies of the native princes, their disposition to league against our power with the view of expelling us from India, their inclination to court a French alliance in order to gain this their favourite object, rendered it really unsafe to leave them in a state of entire independence. We had been compelled to interfere in their affairs and to regulate the succession to their thrones upon each successive discovery of designs hostile to us, nay, threatening our very existence, the subversion of all the fabric of useful and humane and enlightened polity which we had erected on the ruins of their own barbarous system, and particularly the restriction of the cruel despotism under which the native millions had formerly groaned. On each successive occasion, therefore, of this description, Lord Wellesley compelled the government which he installed to make a perpetual treaty by which a stipulated force under our own command was to be maintained at the expense of the native power, and the control of all state affairs, save what related to the palace and the family of the nominal sovereign, was to be vested in the British resident. The fall of Tippoo Sultan did not more effectually consolidate our Indian empire and secure it against

all future dangers than the Subsidiary System thus introduced and established.

Among the dissentients on these subjects was found the prevailing party in the East India Company's direction. Lord Wellesley at one time resigned his government in consequence of their support being withdrawn, and was only prevailed on to retain his position at a most critical period of Indian history by the earnest intercession of Mr. Pitt's government, who gave him, as did Lord Sidmouth with his characteristic courage, sagacity, and firmness, their steady support.* Nothing, however, can be more satisfactory, nor anything more creditable to the Company, as well as to Lord Wellesley's administration, than the change of opinion manifested by that body towards the end of his life. An address was voted unanimously to him, upon the publication of his Dispatches, in 1837, and it is fit that I extract its concluding passage :—"To the eventful period of your Lordship's government the Court look back with feelings common to their countrymen ; and, anxious that the minds of their servants should be enlarged by the instruction to be derived from the accumulated experience of eminent statesmen, they felt it a duty to diffuse widely the means of consulting a

* Lord Wellesley always gratefully acknowledged the merits and services of Lord Sidmouth, to whom he had through life been much attached.

work unfolding the principles upon which the supremacy of Britain in India was successfully manifested and enlarged under a combination of circumstances in the highest degree critical and difficult." With this view a hundred copies of the Dispatches were ordered to be sent to the different Presidencies in addition to those already transmitted, "as containing a fund of information of incalculable value to those actively engaged in the diplomatic, legislative, and military business of India."

A present of 20,000*l.* was also on this occasion voted to Lord Wellesley. He had ever shown the entire disregard of money which with so few exceptions has always marked great men. But especially was this displayed on one memorable occasion. He had given up to the army engaged in the conquest of Mysore his share, amounting to 100,000*l.*, of the booty which came to be distributed. This munificent sacrifice is recited by the Company in the vote of the present as one of its grounds.

It was not to conquest and to negotiation that Lord Wellesley's government confined its attention. He applied the same enlarged views to the improvement of the service, and to bettering the condition of the countless multitudes under his rule. That the arts of peace occupied their due share of his attention we have abundant proof in the establishment of the Calcutta College, the promotion of scientific researches especially into the natural

history of the Peninsula, the opening the Indian commerce as far as the Company would allow, the aid given to missions, but under strict and necessary precaution of maintaining toleration, and avoiding all offence to the natives, and accompanied with the suppression of sangues, or human sacrifices. In the vigour of this act, so characteristic of the man, he was imitated by Lord William Bentinck, one of his ablest and best successors, whose peremptory ordinance at once put down the last remains of that abominable and bloody superstition, the suttees, or burning of widows on the graves of their husbands. In some of these measures, particularly those relating to the Calcutta College and the Indian trade, he was as much thwarted by the Honourable Company as in his foreign policy. But while that wary body denounced his measures as expensive to their treasury, they forgot to calculate how greatly that treasury had been increased by those very operations of which they always complained so bitterly. By his conquests, and his financial reforms, he had more than doubled their revenue, which from seven millions now reached fifteen. The spectacle of the sanctified Mrs. Cole's application to Mr. Loader's bottle of brandy in Foote's farce, or her wishes to have a small consignment of nuns to make her fortune in a season, and then leave her only the care of her soul, is not more edifying than that of the Honour-

able Company, always protesting against the addition of a foot to their territory, and denouncing the policy which trebled it, while they quietly took possession, without a murmur, of the gains thus acquired, at once relieving their consciences by the murmurs, and replenishing their purse by the spoil.*

Lord Wellesley returned from his glorious administration at a very critical period in our parliamentary history. Mr. Pitt was stricken with the malady which proved fatal—a typhus fever, caught from some accidental infection, when his system was reduced by the stomach complaints which he had long laboured under. He soon appointed a time when his friend might come to see him. This, their last interview, was in the villa on Putney Heath, where he died within a few days. Lord Wellesley called upon me there many years after; the house was then occupied by my brother-in-law, Mr. Eden, whom I was visiting. His Lordship showed me the place where these illustrious friends sat, meeting for the last time. Mr. Pitt was, he said, much emaciated and enfeebled, but retained his gaiety and his constitutionally sanguine disposition; he expressed his confident hopes of recovery.

* The detail into which I have entered on Lord Wellesley's Indian administration is due, not only to the importance of the subject, but to the authenticity of the materials. He himself examined in 1836 the views which I had taken of this complicated subject, so little familiar to statesmen in this country; and he declared that they correctly represented his proceedings and his policy.

In the adjoining room he lay a corpse the ensuing week; and it is a singular and a melancholy circumstance, resembling the stories told of William the Conqueror's deserted state at his decease, that some one in the neighbourhood having sent a message to inquire after Mr. Pitt's state, he found the wicket open, then the door of the house, and, nobody answering the bell, he walked through the rooms till he reached the bed on which the minister's body lay lifeless, the sole tenant of the mansion of which the doors a few hours before were darkened by crowds of suitors alike obsequious and importunate, the vultures whose instinct haunts the carcasses only of living ministers.

It can hardly be doubted that the party of Mr. Pitt would gladly have rallied under Lord Wellesley had there been among them a leader ready for the House of Commons. But to place Lord Castlereagh or Mr. Canning in the command of their forces against the combined power of Mr. Fox, and Messrs. Grey, Sheridan, and Windham, would have been courting signal defeat. A wiser course was chosen, and the King is said to have had early intelligence of Mr. Fox's days being numbered. He therefore waited patiently until the time came when he could obtain the great object of his wishes, a restoration of the Tory party. First, he wished to have excited the country against the Whigs upon the failure of the investigation into the Princess of Wales's conduct; for

then he would have availed himself of the strong feelings of the English people against conjugal misconduct, and their dislike of the illustrious husband, an object of his royal father's constant dislike. But before this plot had ripened he found that the cry of danger to the Church, and the universal feeling against the Irish Catholics, would better serve his purpose, and serve it without risk to the royal family. Accordingly, on this ground he fastened a quarrel upon his Whig servants; and they ceased for many a long year to rule the councils of the country.

It is a singular instance of George III.'s self-command and power of waiting his opportunity, that after Mr. Fox's death, when he had doomed in his own mind the Whig ministry to perdition, and while seeking eagerly the occasion to throw them down, he allowed them to dissolve Parliament, thereby entailing upon himself the necessity of a second dissolution within a few months.

Lord Wellesley kept aloof from all these transactions; and his enemies, particularly a person of the name of Paul, whom he had at one time served and afterwards refused to promote, attempted an impeachment. The failure of this scheme was signal, and ended in new votes by large majorities, approving of his Indian administration. But his extreme sense of propriety hindered him, while the impeachment was pending, from taking the government on Mr. Fox's death, when he might, as

soon as the Whigs resigned, have succeeded as prime minister.

In 1809 he was prevailed upon to accept the embassy to Spain; and the large and enlightened views which he soon took of all the questions of Spanish policy were, when made known to those most familiar with the affairs of the Peninsula, the subject of wonder and of unmixed applause. I have heard Lord Holland and Mr. Allen, with both of whom he freely corresponded on those matters, declare that he was the person whom they had ever known who most impressed them with the idea of a great statesman. Upon his return, at the end of 1809, he was with some difficulty prevailed upon by the King to accept the department of Foreign Affairs, which he continued to administer till the beginning of 1812, when irreconcileable differences with Mr. Perceval, his narrow views of policy in all the departments of the state, his bigotry on the Catholic Question, his niggard support of the Spanish war, made it impossible to remain longer his colleague. At his death Lord Wellesley was commissioned by the Prince Regent to form a Coalition Government, and negotiated for some days with Lord Grenville and Lord Grey for that desirable object. The Regent's sincerity was more than doubtful. So Lord Wellesley soon found, and gave up the task as hopeless.

Upon Lord Liverpool's accession to the vacant

premiership, he continued to discharge his parliamentary duty, guided by the independent and enlightened principles which he had ever professed. He brought forward the Catholic Question in 1812, and only lost it by a majority of one, in a House where the cause was deemed the most hopeless. In 1819 he made a magnificent speech in support of the Government, when he deemed the peace of the country, and the safety of her institutions, threatened by the proceedings of the demagogue party. But while I acknowledged the ability he now displayed, and admired the youthful vigour which so many years, and years partly spent in Eastern climes, had not been able to impair, I could not avoid feeling that his old anti-jacobin fervour had been revived by sounds rather than substance, and that he had shaped his conduct unconstitutionally, by assuming that the bad times of 1793 and 1794 were renewed in our later day. Lord Grenville's conduct was on this occasion liable to the same remark. Not, however, that even we, who most strenuously opposed the coercive measures, had any doubt of the perils attending the abuse of unlimited public meetings. We felt that it must lead to evil, and that, if unrestrained, it would end either in changing or in shaking the constitution. Lord Hutchinson, I well remember, openly avowed his satisfaction that measures which had become of pressing necessity had been taken

rather by a Tory than a Whig Government; and declared that public meetings must either be regulated or forbidden. But we disapproved the course taken by the Ministers, and we were persuaded that the accounts of treasonable conspiracies were greatly exaggerated, holding it certain that, how dangerous soever the very large meetings might be, the plots sought to be connected with them were hatched in the brains of spies and other Government emissaries.*

In 1825 Lord Wellesley accepted the high office of Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. His government was signalised by persevering attempts to obtain the emancipation of the Catholics, and he was of course the object of bitter hatred and unsparing attack from the more violent of the Orange party. His recall took place upon the formation of the Wellington ministry in 1828. When at the end of 1830 the Whigs came into office, he was ap-

* Mention having been made in the text of Lord Wellesley's early anti-jacobin prejudices giving a bias to his conduct in 1819, it is only fair to add that these prejudices in no wise warped his judgment in spring, 1815. He at that critical moment was against a renewal of the war, and friendly to continuing at peace with France, though under Napoleon. He was intimately persuaded that both the French people and their ruler were entirely changed in their feelings and views, and that we had no right to burthen ourselves with all the heavy costs of a new war, independent of its risk, in order to restore the Bourbons a second time against the people's will.

pointed Lord Steward of the Household, and in 1833 he resumed the Viceroyalty of Ireland, which he held until the change of Government in 1834. He then resigned at once his high office, not waiting till he should be pressed by the new Government to retain it, as in all probability he would have been. He held himself bound in honour to the Whig party to retire upon their very unceremonious dismissal by King William. Steady to his party, he was actively engaged in preparing the opposition to the Peel Ministry; arranged the important measure of the speakership, the first blow which that Ministry received; and with his own hand drew the resolution which on the 8th of April brought it to a close. It cannot be affirmed that the Whig party was equally steady to him. On their accession to power, I have heard him say, he received the first intimation that he was not to return to Ireland from one of the door-keepers at the House of Lords, whom he overheard, as he passed, telling another person of my friend Lord Mulgrave's appointment.

The secret history of this transaction is not yet known; and we are bound to disbelieve all reports which the gossip of the idle, or the malice of the spiteful, or the mistaken zeal of friends may propagate. Two things, however, are certain: *first*, Lord Wellesley's removal from among the Whigs —that is, his not being re-appointed in April, 1835—could not by possibility be owing to any

the least doubt of his great capacity for affairs continuing as vigorous as ever, because I have before me a dispatch in which the head of the Government, as late as the end of August, 1834, declares "the solving of the problem of Irish government to be a task every way worthy of Lord Wellesley's powerful and comprehensive understanding;" adding, "You will not suspect me of flattery when I say that in my conscience I believe there is no man alive more equal to such a work, and more capable of effecting it than your Excellency"—*secondly*, falsehood never assumed a more foul or audacious form than in the eulogies lavished upon the new Government at the expense of Lord Wellesley's Irish administration. That Government, it was said, never would have passed the Coercion Act of 1833! Indeed! But that Coercion Act came from Lord Melbourne's own office, when as Home Secretary he presided over the Irish department; the only mitigation of the Act having been effected by the Government of 1834 on Lord Wellesley's suggestion. The successor of Lord Wellesley, it was also said, for the first time administered the Government fairly and favourably towards the Catholics. Indeed! but Lord Wellesley first brought forward Catholics for the higher offices in the law, and continually propounded measures in their favour, which for some reason or other were never carried into effect. There are two classes of persons who must be

covered with shame upon reading such passages as the following, extracted from his Lordship's dispatch of September, 1834; the vile calumniators of Lord Wellesley as never having given the Catholics fair play, and those who suffered their supporters to varnish over their weakness by an invidious contrast of their doings with his, profiting by the constantly repeated falsehood that they were the first who ever treated with justice the professors of a religion to which the bulk of the people belonged. "I think it would be advisable (says his Excellency) to open three seats on the judicial bench, and to take one of the judges from the Roman Catholic bar. This would give the greatest satisfaction to the whole Roman Catholic body. Your lordship, I am convinced, will concur with me in opinion that the Roman Catholics of Ireland have never yet been admitted to the full benefit of the laws passed for their relief. Entitled by law to admission into almost any office in the state, they have been, and are still, practically excluded from almost every branch of the executive administration of the Government. The few admitted into the station of assistant-barristers, or into the police, only serve to mark the right to admission, without any approach to an equitable distribution of official benefit. It is impossible to suppose that a whole nation can repose confidence, or act cordially with a Government when so large a portion of the people are practically excluded

from all share in the higher offices of the state, while their right to admission is established by law. I therefore conceive that one of the first steps towards the pacification of Ireland should be the correction of this defect; and for this purpose I submit to your lordship's judgment that it is expedient to admit a certain proportion of Roman Catholics into the privy council, to the bench, to the higher stations of the law, to other efficient civil offices, and to increase their numbers in the police and in other establishments. This system should be commenced at the same time with the new legal appointments, which would form a main part of it. I would also appoint some Roman Catholics of distinction to the privy council. This would be a commencement which I can venture to assure your lordship would be safe and most satisfactory to the whole Roman Catholic body of Ireland." He then encloses a list of those Roman Catholics whom he recommends, and requests an affirmative answer, that he "may immediately make the necessary official applications to the Home Secretary."

In making public this remarkable document, I violate no official confidence; for though I held the Great Seal at the time when this important correspondence passed, I was not, owing to some accident, made acquainted with any part of it until the present time (1843*). I am therefore wholly

* This was written in that year.

free from the responsibility of having neglected so material a communication. When the Ministers met in Cabinet at the end of October, they had hardly time left, before their dismissal, to mature any plan such as that which Lord Wellesley so earnestly recommended; but some of those Ministers, aware of that plan, must have felt that they received a strange piece of good fortune, if not of very strict justice, when they found themselves all of a sudden, in May, 1835, zealously supported by the traducers of Lord Wellesley, and upon the express ground of their being just to the Catholics, whom he had never thought of relieving. I have repeatedly, in my place, while these Ministers were present and in power, denounced the gross injustice and the scandalous falsehood of those their supporters, who professed to prefer them to Lord Grey's Government and mine, because we had passed a Coercion Bill which had the entire concurrence and the cordial support of the very Ministers now declared to be incapable of suffering such a measure; and I have expressed my astonishment that any class of men could submit to receive support upon such grounds, without at once declaring that the blame and the praise were alike falsely bestowed; but I was not on these occasions aware of the extreme to which this falsehood was carried, as regarded Lord Wellesley's administration, and I was not till now informed of the extraordinary

self-command which my illustrious friend had shown in suffering all such imputations without any attempt to protect himself from their force.*

A very useful lesson of caution is taught by this passage in Lord Wellesley's life. How often do we see vehement and unceasing attacks made upon a minister or a statesman, perhaps not in the public service, for something which he does not choose to defend or explain, resting his claims to the confidence of his country upon his past exertions and his known character! Yet these assaults are unremittingly made upon him, and the people believe that so much noise could not be stirred up without something to authorise it. Sometimes the objects of the calumny are silent from disdain, sometimes from knowing that the base propagators of it will only return to their slander the more eagerly after their conviction of falsehood; but sometimes also the silence may be owing to official reserve. We here see in Lord Wellesley's case a most remarkable example of that reserve. All the while that the

* Equal abstinence and dignity did he show in never allowing the laudatory opinions expressed of him in 1834 to be cited as an answer to the statement industriously whispered about rather than openly promulgated, by way of extenuating the refusal to re-appoint him in May, 1835. It was said that he no longer had the vigour of mind required for the difficulties of the Administration; but Lord Melbourne declared, a few months before, that no one was so fit to grapple with those difficulties.

disseminators of slander were proclaiming him as abandoning the Catholics—him who had been the first to move, and within a hair's-breadth to obtain, their emancipation in the Lords, the stronghold of their enemies—all the while that they were exalting his successors at his expense, by daily repeating the false assertion that they for the first time conceived the just and politic plan of removing every obstruction arising from religion to a full enjoyment of the public patronage—all the while that they were placing the Melbourne Ministry upon a pinnacle, as having first adopted this liberal system of government—there lay in the Government repositories the original (in Lord Wellesley's the copy) of a dispatch, explaining, recommending, enforcing the necessity of that course, and stating his desire to carry the plan into immediate execution, when the return of the King's messenger should bring the permission, which he solicited so earnestly, of his official superiors. If that permission was delayed for three months, until the Ministry was changed, and Lord Wellesley followed them into retirement, he at least was not to be blamed for the mischance; yet for eight years did he remain silent under those charges—for eight years did the Ministry maintain the same silence under the support which those charges brought them—nay, with the parliamentary majorities which those charges daily afforded them;

and now, for the first time, that document sees the light, in which was recorded an irrefragable proof that the charges were not merely false, but the very reverse of the truth—that the support thus given rested upon a foundation positively opposite to the fact.

The excellence of Lord Wellesley's speeches has been mentioned. The taste which he had formed from study of the great Greek exemplars kept him above all tinsel and vulgar ornaments, and made him jealously hold fast by the purity of our language; but it had not taught him the virtue of conciseness; and he who knew the Περι Στεφανου by heart, and always admitted its unmeasurable superiority to the Second Philippic and the Pro Milone, yet formed his own style altogether upon the Roman model. That style, indeed, was considerably diffuse; and the same want of compression, the same redundancy of words, accompanied, however, by substantial though not always needful sense, was observable, though much less observable, in his poetical pieces, which generally possessed very high excellence. It is singular to mark the extraordinary contrast which his thoughts and his expressions presented in this respect. There was nothing superfluous or roundabout in his reasoning—nothing dilatory or feeble in the conceptions which produced his plans. He saw his object at once, and with intuitive sagacity; he saw

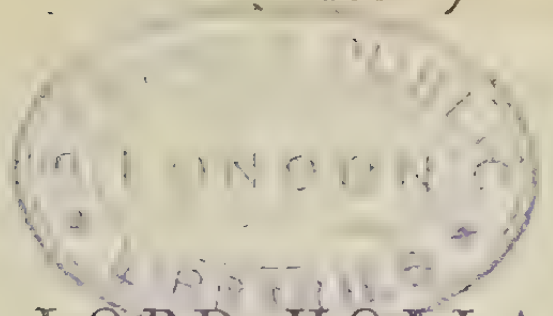
it in its true colours and real dimensions; he at one glance espied the path, and the shortest path, that led to it; he in an instant took that path, and reached his end. The only prolixity that he ever fell into was in explaining or defending the proceedings thus concisely and rapidly taken. To this some addition was not unnaturally made by the dignity which the habits of vice-regal state made natural to him, and the complimentary style which, if a very little tinctured with Oriental taste, was very much more the result of a kindly and generous nature.

I have felt precluded from indulging in general description by the intimacy of my intercourse with this great statesman, and I have accordingly kept my promise to the reader of letting the narrative of his actions draw his portrait; but it would be unjust to omit all mention of that lofty nature which removed him above every thought of personal interest, and made him so careless of all sordid considerations, that I verily believe he spent several fortunes without ever having lost a farthing at play, or ever having indulged in any other expensive vice. His original embarrassments, and from these he never was relieved, arose entirely from generously paying his father's debts.* He

* The Corporation of Dublin unanimously voted him their freedom in token of the admiration which this conduct had excited.

was exceedingly fond of glory, and loved dearly the fame that should follow such great deeds as his; but he had no kind of envy, no jealousy of other men's greatness; and a better proof can hardly be given of his magnanimity than the extreme warmth of the praise which he lavished profusely on all the great commanders whom he employed. He earnestly pressed, but it is strange to say, vainly pressed, even their promotion to the peerage sixteen years before it took place, without ever harbouring a thought of the tendency which their elevation might have to eclipse his own fame in vulgar eyes.

Nothing could be more gentle and affectionate than his whole disposition; and during his latter years, next to his books, nothing so refreshed his mind as the intercourse with those friends in whose society and converse he delighted. It is impossible for me to revise this paper and not have present to my mind, and again submitted to my admiration, the brilliant and successful administration of another most valued friend. Need I name him whose fame is inscribed on the latest page of Eastern history—Lord Ellenborough? The reader of the foregoing pages will at once recognise the congenial spirit of these two great governors.



LORD HOLLAND.

It is a very mournful reflection for me that, much as I might have expected the sacred duty to devolve upon me of paying a just tribute to Lord Wellesley's memory, I should also be called to commemorate the excellence of one whom I might far less have looked to survive, and whose loss made all his friends feel that the value of their own lives was now greatly impaired. It may be doubted if any man in any age ever had so few enemies, so many attached friends, as Lord Holland; and no man certainly could better deserve the universal affection of which he was the object.

His succession to the peerage at a very early age, on his father's death, prevented him from ever sitting in the House of Commons, and thus passing through the best school of English statesmen. His own severe illness, while yet at Eton, gave his uncle, Mr. Fox, a double alarm; for he was not only on the point of losing a nephew whom he loved as if he had been his only child, but ran the imminent risk of being taken from the House

of Commons in the zenith of his fame as a debater and a party chief. He was then in the North of Italy; and the messenger from Devonshire House, commissioned to summon him home on account of the King's illness, met him at Bologna. Mr. Fox had received intelligence of Lord Holland's dangerous illness; and the alarm occasioned by the appearance of the courier was speedily changed into despair by a few words which he dropped, intimating that "he must be dead by this time." Great was Mr. Fox's relief and joy, probably in more ways than one, upon finding that the King was the person alluded to. Many years after this period I saw his banker at Vicenza, who was acquainted with the circumstance of Mr. Fox's alarm; and I was much struck with the familiar notion of this great man's celebrity, which seemed to have reached that remote quarter, at a time when political intelligence was so much less diffused than it has been since the French Revolution. The banker mentioned having given professionally a very practical proof of his respect for the name; he had cashed a bill for the expense of his journey home, though there was no letter of introduction presented; "but I knew him," said the Cambist, "by the prints." The rapid journey home to join the fray then raging in the House of Commons laid the foundation of the liver complaint, which eighteen years later ended in dropsy, and terminated

his life; but he was relieved on his arrival from all anxiety upon account of his nephew, whom he found perfectly restored to health.

Lord Holland went to Christ Church on leaving Eton; and passed his time more gaily than studiously, the companion of Mr. Canning, Lord Carlisle, and Lord Granville. But, like them, he laid both at school and college a broad foundation of classical learning, which through his after-life he never ceased successfully to cultivate.

Upon entering the House of Lords he found the prospects of the Whig party as gloomy as it was possible to contemplate. Before they had nearly recovered from the effects of the ill-starred coalition, their dissensions among themselves upon the great questions of the French Revolution and the war had split them in twain, leaving some of their most powerful families, as the houses of Cavendish, Bentinck, and Wentworth, and some of their most eminent leaders, as Burke, Windham, Loughborough, and North, to join the now resistless forces of Mr. Pitt. Their Parliamentary strength was thus reduced to a mere fraction of the already diminished numbers that had survived the defeat of 1784; and the alarm, not by any means unnatural or unfounded, which the progress of the French arms, and the excesses of the Revolution, had excited throughout the country seemed to

marshal all the friends of our established institutions, whether in Church or in State, and even all men of property and all men of sound and moderate opinions, against those who were branded with the names of revolutionists, levellers, un-English, friends and disciples of the French. For the first time the Whig party, essentially aristocratic as it always had been in former ages, in some sort alien to all popular courses, and standing mainly upon patrician influence against both the court and the multitude, as it had proved itself in its very last struggle for power, had become mixed up with the very extremes of popular enthusiasm, extremes to which the people, even the middle orders, were very averse; and which were only favoured by two classes, alike void of influence in the practical affairs of State, the philosophic few and the mere vulgar. For the first time, they who had ever been reformers on the most restricted scale were fain to join the cry for unlimited reforms, both of Parliament and of all our institutions. The leaders might retain their ancient prejudices in favour of aristocracy and against reform, and might confine their Parliamentary efforts to exposing the misconduct of the war, endeavouring to restore peace, and resisting the measures of coercion adopted by Mr. Pitt unconstitutionally to protect the existing constitution. But the bulk of the party became

more or less connected with the reformers, and even the few who in the House of Commons still adhered to the standard of Mr. Fox were for the most part imbued with the reform faith. The Whig party indeed was then wofully reduced in strength. Mr. Pitt could with certainty carry whatever measures he propounded; and at length, after wasting some years in fruitless attempts to resist his power, having been able to muster no more than 53 votes against suspending the Habeas Corpus Act, 38 for putting an end to the war, and 45 for censuring the illegal act of misapplying the money voted by Parliament, the Opposition, wearied of impotent efforts and impatient of unvaried defeat, retired from their attendance in Parliament, retaining the seats, and refusing to perform the duties of representatives.

It was at this most inauspicious period in the whole Whig history, that Lord Holland entered the House of Lords, where there could hardly be said to remain even the name of an Opposition party. He joined himself, however, to the few supporters of his uncle's principles still to be found there lingering on the Opposition benches,—Lord Lauderdale, the Duke of Bedford, occasionally the first Lord Lansdowne, whose connexion with Lord Holland, and steady opposition to the war, had now well nigh reconciled him with the party, although he always took a line more guided by

general principles of policy, and more enlarged in its views, than suited the narrow-minded notions of factious men.

Lord Holland's course was now, as ever through his whole public life, one which did equal honour to his head and to his heart. The vigilant enemy of abuses; the staunch supporter of the constitution as established in 1688; the friend of peace abroad, and of liberty all over the world; the champion, especially, of religious liberty and the sacred rights of conscience, and that upon sound principles of universal freedom, not from any tinge of fanaticism, from which no man, not even his illustrious kinsman, was more exempt;—he soon obtained that respect in Parliament, and that general esteem among reflecting men in the country, which the mere exhibition of great talents can never command, and which is only to be earned by honest consistency in pursuing a course commendable for its wisdom, or by its sincerity extorting applause from those who disapprove it. During the period of above five and forty years that he continued before the eyes of his countrymen, sometimes filling high office, more frequently engaged in opposition to the Court and the Ministry of the day, it is certain that whensoever any occasion arose of peril to the great cause of toleration, the alarmed eye instinctively turned first of all to Lord Holland as the refuge of the persecuted; and as often as the

constitution in any other respect was endangered, or any bad, exclusive, illiberal policy placed in jeopardy our character abroad and the interests of peace,* to him, among the foremost, did the supporters of a wise and catholic policy look for countenance and comfort in their efforts to arrest the course of evil.

To a higher praise still he was justly entitled—the praise of extraordinary disinterestedness in all questions of colonial policy. In right of Lady Holland, a great Jamaica heiress, he was the owner of extensive possessions cultivated by slave-labour; but there was no more strenuous advocate of the abolition both of the slave trade and slavery; and Lady Holland herself, the person more immediately interested in the continuance of those enormous abuses, had too much wisdom and too much virtue ever to interpose the least difference of opinion on this important subject.

Although he naturally felt towards his uncle all

* I may state what I firmly and with knowledge believe, that Lord Holland, in the lamentable defection from the cause of peace which was made by the Whig Government in 1840, was with the greatest difficulty prevented from resigning his office, and leaving the Ministry to prosecute, without the countenance of his high name, their disastrous course. Were I to add that his actual resignation was sent in to his colleagues, I think I should be guilty of no exaggeration. That he afterwards, during the short residue of his life, regretted not having persisted in this course, I also believe.

the warmth of filial affection, and looked up to him with the singular reverence with which men of extraordinary celebrity and extensive public influence are regarded by their family, he was wholly above the bigotry which suffers no tenet of its object to be questioned, and the enthusiasm which, dazzled by shining merits, is blind to undeniable faults. Not only was he ever ready to admit that the taste for play had proved ruinous to Mr. Fox's political fortunes, as well as his private—ascribing, indeed, fully more to its evil influence than could justly be charged upon it, for he was wont to say that this alone had prevented him from being Minister of the country—but he avoided several prejudices and tastes, if we may so speak of political errors, in which that great man indulged to the serious injury of his understanding and his accomplishments. Thus Mr. Fox, like General Fitzpatrick, Mr. Hare, Lord John Townsend, and others of that connexion, greatly undervalued the talents and pursuits of the Scotch, holding the Irish as infinitely their superiors, and not duly estimating the importance of the sterling good sense, the patient seeking after truth, and the reluctance to deviate from it in their statements, for which, and justly, the Scotch are famous. Lord Holland had no such prejudice: on the contrary, he greatly preferred the men of the North, and had no disinclination to their peculiar pursuits,

their metaphysics and their political economy, their eagerness after facts, their carelessness of fancies, their addiction to the useful, their disregard of the graces. In the speeches of Mr. Fox and his school—always, of course, excepting Mr. Burke—it was easy to observe a want of information upon many subjects well worthy the attention of statesmen, and an ignorance of which may indeed be held fatal to their character for profound and enlarged views of policy. They were well read in history, deeply versed in the principles of the constitution and its learning, and acquainted (Mr. Fox himself especially) with the policy and interests of foreign courts; but to these subjects, and to the debates in Parliament of former times, their information was confined; while Lord Holland scarcely ever addressed the House of Lords without showing that he was both a scholar in the best sense of the word, and had formed an acquaintance with various branches of knowledge which are far too much neglected in the education of English gentlemen. Upon everything relating to religious controversy he was in a particular manner well informed. His residence, too, in Spain at different times had filled his mind with an accurate and detailed knowledge both of the history and the literature of the Peninsula, and generally of the South of Europe. The liberal hospitality which he exercised at home, making Holland House the resort not only of the

most interesting persons composing English society, literary, philosophical, and political, but also of all belonging to those classes who ever visited this country from abroad, served to maintain and extend his acquaintance with whatever regarded the rest of Europe.

Lord Holland's powers as a speaker were of a very high order. He was full of argument, which he could pursue with great vigour and perfect closeness; copious in illustration; with a chaste and pure diction, shunning, like his uncle, everything extravagant in figure and unusual in phrase; often, like him, led away by an ingenuity, and like him not unfrequently led to take a trivial view of his subject, and to dwell upon some small matter which did not much help on the business in hand, but always keeping that in view, and making no sacrifices to mere effect. Declamation—solemn, sustained declamation—was the forte of neither, although occasionally the uncle would show that he could excel in that also, as Raphael has painted perhaps the finest fire-light piece in the world, and Titian the noblest landscape. Neither made any the least pretence to gracefulness of action, and both were exceedingly deficient in voice, the nephew especially, as he had little of the redeeming quality by which his uncle occasionally penetrated and thrilled his audience with those high and shrill notes that proceeded from him when, heated with his argu-

ment, he overpowered both his own natural hesitation and the faculties of his hearer. In Lord Holland the hesitation was so great as to be often painful; and, instead of yielding to the increased volume of his matter, it often made him breathless in the midst of his more vehement discourse. He wanted command of himself; and, seeming to be run away with, he was apt to lose the command over his audience. The same delicate sense of humour which distinguished Mr. Fox he also showed; and much of that exquisite Attic wit, which formed so large and so effective a portion of that great orator's argumentation, never uselessly introduced, always adapted nicely to the occasion, always aiding, and, as it were, clinching the reasoning.

Thus accomplished as he was for the rhetorical art, had his health, and a kind of indolence common to the Fox family—perhaps, too, their disdain of all preparation, all but natural eloquence—allowed him to study oratory more, it is difficult to say how high a place he might have reached among orators. Certainly no one could any day have been surprised to hear him deliver some great speech of equal merit with those of the illustrious kinsman whom he so much resembled. It was once said by Lord Erskine, on hearing him make, off-hand, a great display of argumentative power, "I shall complain of the Usher of the Black Rod: why did he not take Charles Fox into custody last night? What

the deuce business has a member of the other House to come up and make his speeches here?"

Of a Cabinet to which, by a singular combination of unlikely chances, he and the other Whigs belonged for eleven or twelve years, he was an efficient member. The places which he held (Privy Seal, and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster) had, especially the former, little duty attached to them. He administered the Duchy, however, with the greatest purity and impartiality; and when one of my legal reforms at one sweep cut off a third of his emoluments (above a thousand a-year), far from making the least resistance, any more than he did to the abolition of slavery, which soon after cost him twice as much, he stated his opinion to be entirely favourable to the change, and only said he was fortunate in having so long held the larger income. As a Minister, however, it is in the Cabinet that his merit must chiefly be estimated; and I can vouch for his having been, in all branches of the King's service, a most useful and excellent colleague. He was perfectly open and frank where he differed in opinion; quite candid, and free from prepossession in favour of his own views; full of information, especially on questions of foreign policy, and on those regarding the constitution; perfectly firm and resolute, when bold courses were to be taken. In occasions of this description, the four years that we passed together as colleagues

were abundantly fruitful, and he never was found wanting. He loved the excitement of office; he liked, from his excellently kind disposition, the disposal of patronage; but he was also very sincerely anxious for the opportunity of promoting his political views, and especially of furthering the cause of liberty everywhere, and maintaining that peace to which it is inseparably wedded. Hence he was more anxious to retain office, and more averse to risk the loss of it, than was always quite consistent with the high principles which he professed; and hence he made himself a party to the unconstitutional Government which, most injuriously to the country, and fatally to the interests of the Whig party, persisted in clinging to place for two years after all power in Parliament, all influence with the country, had departed from them, and nothing remained to prop up the crumbling edifice but the shadow of Court favour, now for the first time embraced as the shelter of a Whig Government from public indignation.

In part, possibly in great part, this misconduct of the Whig Ministry for the two years that followed May, 1839, is to be accounted for, certainly not excused, by their dread of facing the numerous place-lovers and place-hunters with whom they, like every other Government, were beset. In London, and in all corporate towns, there were of course swarms of creatures, hatched by the sunshine of Court favour,

and whose only dreams were of being enabled by the prolonged existence of the Cabinet, those already placed to continue battening on the public carcass, those only in expectancy to wriggle themselves into a share of it. These it was hard to face and to thwart. The same influence, or the same fear of offending adherents, occasioned undoubtedly that other most reprehensible act, an act, too, most hurtful to the Liberal party, the dissolution in 1841. Who can for a moment believe that the Ministers themselves expected to obtain anything like a majority in the new Parliament? Then what possible right had they to make their Sovereign dissolve in order to increase the difficulties of those, her servants, who were to be their successors in office? This they well knew; and of this I warned them by private remonstrance, as indeed I took the liberty of humbly counselling my gracious Sovereign upon the measure, thereby discharging my duty as a Peer of Parliament. But "the pressure from without" was too powerful. Some score of members fancied their seats would be more secure were their own friends in office during the general election, than if that event happened when their adversaries were in power; and to their importunate clamour the Ministers were fain to yield. For this I find it far more difficult to give any excuse on Lord Melbourne's part, than for his proceedings in May, 1839, because I know the excellent nature

of my old and valued friend too well to doubt that his retaining office then arose from a feeling, a mistaken one certainly, of duty to the person of the Queen. It may be unpleasant for any Minister to thwart the views of persons as active as they are insignificant in all respects save their power of being troublesome. But then it is his most sacred duty to disregard their buzz. No man in office, no leader of a party in this country, whether in the possession or in the pursuit of power, can be without the courage to face and to resist his adversaries; this is a very ordinary daring indeed. But he is utterly unfit to hold office, or to lead a party, who has not the higher and nobler courage to face and to resist his followers, and to hold his path onward regardless of their clamour, alike immoveable from his fixed and stable resolves by the sordid howl of placemen, or the louder shout that proceeds from the multitude—from the *ardor civium prava jubentium.* To all who flinch from this I could read innumerable lessons in the striking contrast afforded by the official conduct, but indeed by the whole public life, of my dear and venerated friend Lord Grey, whose absence from the scene of debate has of late been so deeply lamented by every lover of his country, to whatever class or party he might belong.

Lord Holland's literary pursuits were varied and successful; for without giving much of his mind to composition, his 'Life of Lope de Vega,' and one

or two other productions, have a rare degree of excellence. The style is animated and classical; the narrative clear; the remarks sagacious and acute; the translations executed with a closeness and fidelity, and at the same time a poetical felicity, that place him in the highest rank of translators; for instead of giving, like some manglers of Dante, a rugged version as literal as it is unpoetical, and affording not a glimpse of the awful Florentine's figure, we have in Lord Holland's masterly performance a poem closely literal, rendering the very Spanish itself and almost in the same number of words, while it is as much imbued with poetry as if it were originally English. To execute such a work as this is extremely difficult, and far transcends the power of him who fancies he can translate because he knows the foreign language, without possessing any mastery over his mother tongue. It is a difficulty superadded to that of the measure and to that of the rhyme; and accordingly, very few have ever vanquished it. Dryden* and Sotheby

* There is not more poerty in Lucretius's description of hell than in Dryden's version, but it is not like Lucretius. Nor is there so much poetry in Virgil's

"Hic ver perpetuum atque alienis mensibus æstas,"

as in Sotheby's

"Here spring perpetual leads the laughing hours,
And winter wears a wreath of summer flowers."

But the beauty lies in adding a flower to the Georgics. Lord Holland and Mr. Roscoe do not so treat their original and their reader; nor does Mr. Carey; but then theirs is

are poetical, without being close to their divine originals; Cowper unites more of the two qualities than either of them; Lord Holland and Mr. Roscoe stand at the head of the class; and all that can be said in impeachment of this title is, that their efforts have only been directed to small pieces of poetry, and that on a larger scale they might not have been equally successful. I have mentioned Lord Holland's *forte* as a poet; but he wrote several original pieces; and I remember his showing me some political sonnets in the manner of Milton (the first of English sonneteers) which appeared, at least to so indifferent a judge as myself, possessed of very great merit. It is remarkable that, like his uncle, though so fond of poetry, he had no relish for the kindred art, the other branch of harmony. Music was positively disagreeable to them both—a remarkable instance of Shakspere's extravagant error in a well-known passage of his plays.

His prose compositions were distinguished by the same severe taste, and the same strict regard to the purity of his English diction, which Mr. Fox is by some, certainly not by me, thought to have cherished in excess. But Lord Holland's prose style had still higher merits. It was luminous, animated, flowing, and free from the defect under which his illustrious relative's certainly laboured, not that which he him-

poetical English as well as literal version; Mr. Carey's is nothing like poetry, nor very English.

self was afraid of, its resembling a speech, for that it wholly avoided by running into the opposite extreme; it was somewhat stiff and constrained, betokening a want of practice in writing, and at the same time a fear of writing too naturally and easily, as he spoke; for nothing can be more easy and flowing and graceful than the style of Mr. Fox's letters. Lord Holland's prose style had all this grace and flow: it may be well judged of, not only by his 'Life of Lope de Vega,' but by his excellent 'Preface to Lord Waldegrave's and Lord Orford's Remains,' and, above all, by the admirable protests which he entered upon the Lords' journals, and by the publication of which in a volume Mr. Moylan has rendered an acceptable service both to politics and letters.

After all, it was in his private and domestic capacity that Lord Holland's principal charm lay. No man's conversation was more delightful. It was varied, animated, passing "from grave to gay, from lively to severe;" full of information, chequered with the most admirable vein of anecdote, but also with deep remark, and aided by a rare power of mimicry, never indulged in a way to offend by its harshness. Whoever had heard him represent Lord Thurlow, or the late Lord Lansdowne, or the famous Duke of Brunswick, or George Selwyn, little needed to lament not having seen those celebrated personages. His advice was excellent; he viewed with

perfect calmness the whole circumstances of his friend who consulted him; he foresaw all difficulties and consequences with intuitive perception and never-failing sagacity; he threw his whole soul into the discussion; and he was entirely free from the bias as well of selfishness as of prejudice in the counsels which he gave. The great delight of those who approached him was certainly in the amiable disposition of his heart, and of a temper so perfectly sweet, so perseveringly mild, that nothing could ruffle it for an instant, nor any person, nor any passing event, make the least impression upon its even surface. Many tempers are equal and placid constitutionally, but then this calm results from their being cold; the waters are not troubled, because their surface is frozen. Lord Holland's temper, on the contrary, like his uncle's, was warm, excitable, lively, animated. Yet I knew him intimately for five-and-thirty years, during a portion of which we had political and even party differences; I had during the most of these years almost daily intercourse with him; I can positively assert that though I saw him often sorely tried, and fear me I was now and then among those who tried him, I never for one moment perceived that there was in his composition the least element of anger, spite, peevishness, or revenge. In my whole experience of our race I never saw such a temper, nor anything that at all resembled it.

His was the disposition of the Fox family. They have a noble and lofty character; their nature is generous and humane. Selfishness, meanness, craft, are alien to their whole composition. Open, manly, confiding, combining the highest qualities of the understanding with the best feelings of the heart, and marked throughout by the innocent simplicity of infancy; no wonder that they win the affections of all who approach them—that is to say, who approach so near and know them so long as to be familiar with them—for both Mr. Fox and his nephew had the manners, somewhat repulsive at first, of patrician life; and the uncle, especially, was for a while even severely forbidding to strangers. It must be added that their aristocratic propensities were not confined to manner; they had the genuine Whig predilection for that kind of support, and regarded, perhaps justly regarded, the union of great families as absolutely necessary to maintain the popular cause against the Court. Mr. Fox, however, went a little further; and showed more complacency in naming highly-born supporters, than might seem altogether to consist with a high popular tone, or with the tenets of a philosophical statesman. It is to be added that with the simplicity of an infantine nature, they had the defect, as regards their affections, of that tender age. Their feelings were strong, but not deep; the impressions made on their heart were passing, and

soon effaced. I have often rallied and sometimes remonstrated with my friend on this peculiarity, when I saw him as I thought regarding men rather with the eyes of a naturalist than a brother, and rather taking an interest in observing their habits and marking their peculiarities, than feeling as deeply as their relation to us required.* But with these imperfections (how trifling compared to his virtues!) it is painful to think he is gone for ever; and cruel to survey the blank he has left. Once more one is forced mournfully to exclaim,—"Eheu! quanto minus est cum aliis versari quam tui meminisse!"

It would be a very imperfect account of Lord Holland which should make no mention of the friend who for the latter and more important part of his life shared all his thoughts and was never a day apart from him, Mr. John Allen; or the loss which in him the world of politics and of science, but still more, our private circle, has lately had to

* One of the most able and learned men whom I have ever known, and one of the most sagacious observers, Mr. R. P. Smith, who read these pages, and well knew Lord Holland, with whom he was nearly connected by marriage, while he acknowledged the general accuracy of the portrait I had drawn, objected to this portion, unless an addition were made, in which I entirely concur, that after ever so long an absence from any of his friends his warmth of affection revived, and was as great as before the separation.

deplore—another blank which assuredly cannot be filled up. He was educated at Edinburgh as a physician, and stood far at the head of all his contemporaries as a student of the sciences connected with the healing art; but he also cultivated most successfully all the branches of intellectual philosophy, and was eminent in that famous school of metaphysics, for his extensive learning and his unrivalled power of subtle reasoning. For some years he lectured most ably on Physiology, but before entering on practice he accepted an invitation to attend Lord Holland's family, during the peace of Amiens, on their journey first to France, then to Spain, where they remained till the year 1805. The materials which he collected in the latter country for a complete account of it, both historical and statistical, were of great extent and value; and a considerable portion of the work was completed, when the pleasures of political discussion, working with the natural indolence of his habits as he advanced in life, occasioned him to lay it aside; and of late years he chiefly confined his labours to some very learned papers upon the antiquarian lore of the English constitution in the 'Edinburgh Review.' He also published, in 1830, a learned and luminous work upon the ancient history of that constitution.

He had originally been a somewhat indiscriminate admirer of the French Revolution, and was

not of the number of its eulogists whom the excesses of 1793, and 1794, alienated from its cause. Even the Directorial tyranny had not opened his eyes to the evils of its course; but a larger acquaintance with mankind, more of what is termed "knowledge of the world," greatly mitigated the strength of his opinions, and his minute study of the ancient history of our own constitution completed his emancipation from earlier prejudices—nay, rather cast his opinions into the opposite scale; for it is certain that during the last thirty or forty years of his life, in other words, during all his political life, far from tolerating revolutionary courses, or showing any tenderness towards innovations, he was a reformer on so small a scale that he could hardly be brought to approve of any change at all in our Parliamentary constitution. He held the measure of 1831-32 as all but revolutionary; augured ill of its effects on the structure of the House of Commons; and regarded it as having in the result worked great mischief on the composition of that body, whatever benefit it might have secured to the Whigs as a party movement. Lord Holland had made up his mind to an entire approval of the scheme as necessary, if not for the country, at least for the Liberal party, to which he was devoted; and he supported it, as his uncle had done the far less extensive reform proposed by Lord Grey in 1797, which, less as it was, very much exceeded

any reform views of his own—supported it as a party measure, necessary for keeping together the Liberal body and consolidating their power.

Although Mr. Allen, during the latter and principal period of his life, never abandoned his scientific pursuits, retaining his full knowledge of physical and moral science, and his early taste for such speculations, yet it was chiefly between the politics of the day and the constitutional history of this country that he divided his time. No one could be more useful as an adviser upon all political measures, because he clearly saw their tendency, and never for a moment suffered himself to be led astray by party prejudice or popular clamour. Indeed, like all who, in the enthusiasm of younger years, have been for a while beguiled into extravagant democratic opinions, he rather leant too severely against merely popular courses, and was somewhat too much inclined to have the public affairs which are directed for the good of the people managed with as little as possible of their interference or consent—forgetting that no real security for those affairs taking that direction can be had except by giving a sufficient control to the popular voice; but chiefly of the Court he was always distrustful, and herein he had the genuine Whig spirit excited and confirmed by his deep study of our former history. The only failing which seemed occasionally to lessen the weight of his counsel was

a certain irritability of temper and impatience of contradiction, especially upon subjects which he had deeply studied, and on which he had formed a clear and strong opinion. It must be said that the by-stander could well sympathise with those little ebullitions when they escaped him in argument with some sciolist, or some every-day politician whose whole knowledge of his subject was picked up in the clubs, or gathered from the papers of the morning, or at best gleaned from the recent volumes of the 'Parliamentary Debates.'

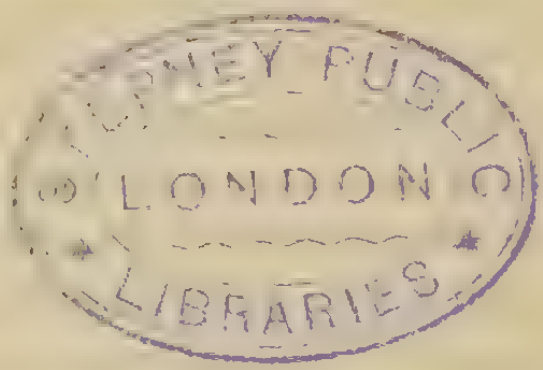
If it be asked what was the peculiar merit, the characteristic excellence of Mr. Allen's understanding, the answer is not difficult to make. It was the rare faculty of combining general views with details of fact, and thus at once availing himself of all that theory or speculation presents for our guide, with all that practical experience affords to correct those results of general reasoning. This great excellence was displayed by him in everything to which he directed his mind, whether it were the political questions of the day, which he treated as practically as the veriest drudge in any of the public offices, and yet with all the enlargement of view which marked the statesman and the philosopher; or the speculations of history, which he studied at once with the acumen that extracts from it as an essence the general progress of our species, after the manner of Voltaire and Millar; and with the

minute observation of facts and weighing of evidence which we trace through the luminous and picturesque pages of Robertson and Gibbon. He for whom no theory was too abstract, no speculation too general, could so far stoop to the details of practical statesmanship as to give a friend, proceeding for the first time on a delicate and important mission, this sound advice:—"Don't ever appear anxious about any point, either in arguing to convince those you are treating with, or in trying to obtain a concession from them. It often may happen that your indifference will gain a much readier access to their minds. Earnestness and anxiety are necessary for one addressing a public assembly—not so for a negotiator."

The character of Mr. Allen was of the highest order. His integrity was sterling, his honour pure and untarnished. No one had a more lofty disdain of those mean tricks to which, whether on trifles or matters of importance, worldly men have too frequent recourse. Without the shadow of fanaticism in any of its forms, he was, in all essential particulars, a person of the purest morals; and his indignation was never more easily roused than by the aspect of daring profligacy or grovelling baseness. His feelings, too, were warm; his nature kind and affectionate. No man was a more steady or sincere friend; and his enmity, though fierce, was placable.

It may naturally be asked how it happened that one of his great talents, long experience, and many rare accomplishments, intimately connected as he was with the leading statesmen of his time (the Ministers of the Crown for the last ten years of his life), should never have been brought into public life, nor ever been made in any way available to the service of the country? Nor can the answer to this question be that he had no powers of public speaking, and would, if in Parliament, have been for the most part a silent member; because it would not be easy to name a more unbroken silence than was for many long years kept by such leading Whigs as Mr. Hare, Lord John Townsend, and General Fitzpatrick, without whom, nevertheless, it was always supposed that the Whig phalanx would have been wanting in its just proportions; and also because there are many important, many even high political, offices that can well and usefully be filled by men wholly unused to the wordy war; yet Mr. Allen never filled any place except as Secretary, nay Under Secretary, for a few months, to the Commissioners for treating with America in 1806. Then I fear we are driven, in accounting for this strange fact, to the high aristocratic habits of our Government, if the phrase may be allowed; and can comprehend Mr. Allen's entire exclusion from power in no other way than by considering it as now a fixed and settled rule that there is in this

country a line drawn between the ruling caste and the rest of the community—not, indeed, that the latter are mere hewers of wood and drawers of water, but that, out of a profession like the bar, intimately connected with politics, or out of the patrician circles themselves the monopolists of political preferment, no such rise is in ordinary cases possible. The genius of our system, very far from consulting its stable endurance, appears thus to apportion its labours and its enjoyment, separating the two classes of our citizens by an impassable line, and bestowing freely upon the one the sweat and the toil, while it reserves strictly for the other the fruit and the shade.



APPENDIX.

[*Walpole and Bolingbroke do not belong to the reign of George III. But it is impossible well to understand Lord Chatham without considering Walpole also. However, the great importance of continually holding up Walpole to the admiration of all statesmen, and Bolingbroke, except for his genius, to their reprobation, is the chief ground of inserting this Appendix.*]

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE.

The antagonist whom Lord Chatham first encountered on his entering into public life was the veteran Walpole, who instinctively dreaded him the moment he heard his voice; and having begun by exclaiming, "We must muzzle that terrible Cornet of horse!" either because he found him not to be silenced by promotion, or because he deemed punishment in this case better than blandishment, ended by taking away his commission, and making him an enemy for ever. It was a blunder of the first order; it was of a kind, too, which none less than Walpole were apt to commit: perhaps it was the most injudicious thing, possibly the only very

injudicious thing, he ever did; certainly it was an error for which he paid the full penalty before he ceased to lead the House of Commons and govern the country.

Few men have ever reached and maintained for so many years the highest station which the citizen of a free state can hold, who have enjoyed more power than Sir Robert Walpole, and have left behind them less just cause of blame, or more monuments of the wisdom and virtue for which his country has to thank him. Of Washington, indeed, if we behold in him a different character, one of a far more exalted description, there is this to be said, both that his imperishable fame rests rather upon the part he bore in the Revolution than on his administration of the Government which he helped to create; and that his unequalled virtue and self-denial never could be practised in circumstances which, like those of Walpole, afforded no temptation to ambition, because they gave no means of usurping larger powers than the law bestowed: consequently his case cannot be compared, in any particular, with that of a prime minister under an established monarchical constitution. But Walpole held for many years the reins of government in England under two princes, neither of them born or bred in the country—held them during the troubles of a disputed succession, and held them while European politics were com-

plicated with various embarrassments; and yet he governed at home without any inroads upon public liberty; he administered the ordinary powers of the constitution without requiring the dangerous help of extreme temporary rigour; he preserved tranquillity at home without pressing upon the people; and he maintained peace abroad without any sacrifice either of the interests or the honour of the country. If no brilliant feats of improvement in our laws or in the condition of the state were attempted;—if no striking evolutions of external policy were executed;—at least all was kept safe and quiet in every quarter, and the irrepressible energies of national industry had the fullest scope afforded them during a lengthened season of repose, which in those days of "foreign war and domestic levy" was deemed a fortune hardly to be hoped for, and of which the history of the country had never offered any example.

Walpole was a man of an ancient, honourable, and affluent family, one of the first in the county of Norfolk, to whose possessions he succeeded while yet too young for entering into the Church, the profession he was destined to had an elder brother lived. Rescued from that humbler fortune (in which, however, he always said he would have risen to the Primacy), he had well-nigh fallen into one more obscure—the life of a country gentleman, in which he might have whiled away his time like

his ancestors, between the profession of a sportsman pursued with zeal, and that of a farmer always failing, because always more than half neglected by him who unites in his own person both landlord and tenant. The dangers of the Protestant succession at the close of King William's reign turned his attention to political matters upon his entrance into Parliament. The death of the Duke of Gloucester, Princess Anne's son, had alarmed both the illustrious prince on the throne and the Whig party in general; the Tories had thrown every obstacle in the way of the Act of Settlement, by which the King was anxiously endeavouring to confirm the freedom he had conquered for his adopted country; they had only introduced it in the hopes of its miscarrying; and the near balance of parties in Parliament, when the Abjuration Oath was carried by a majority of one (188 to 187) evinced too clearly that in the country the decided majority were for the exiled family. It is easy to conceive how greatly the having commenced his public life at such a crisis must have attracted him towards state affairs,* and how lasting an impression the momentous question that first engaged his attention must have produced upon his political sentiments in after-life. Soon after came the great

* He seconded the motion of Sir Charles Hedges to extending the oath to ecclesiastical persons. It was carried without a division.

question of privilege, the case of the Aylesbury men, arising out of the action of Ashby *v.* White; and here he, with the other leading Whigs—the Cowpers, the Kings, the Jekyls, the Cavendishes—took a decided part for the general law of the land, against the extravagant doctrines of privilege maintained by the Tories. Sacheverell's trial—a Whig folly, which he privately did all in his power to prevent—completed his devotion to political life: he was one of the managers, and was exposed to his share of the popular odium under which all the promoters of that ill-advised proceeding not unnaturally fell. The Church party were so powerful that the mob was on their side as well as the Queen's Court; and this incident in Whig history, described by Bolingbroke as "having a parson to roast, and burning their hands in the fire," made Walpole dread that fire ever after; for it is not more certain that the share with which he in the Act of Settlement successfully commenced his public life, gave a strong Whig bias to his after-life, than it is certain that the Sacheverell case gave him a constitutional abhorrence of religious controversy, and an invincible repugnance to touch any question that could connect itself with Church or Sectarian clamour. Through his whole public life he betrayed a lurking dread of anything on which the religious sentiments of the community could be brought to bear, as if aware that these

being subjects on which men feel rather than reason, it is impossible to descry before-hand the course public opinion may take upon them, or fix bounds to the excitement they may produce. This, and not any indifference to the great cause of toleration, always kept him from seeking securities which there is every reason to think he would naturally have wished to obtain against the High Church party, and in favour of the Sectaries.

The sagacity of such men as Godolphin and Marlborough early descried Walpole's merit, which at once procured him their favour: with the latter, to whom he owed his first appointment of Secretary at War, his intercourse was always intimate and confidential. When a vile Court intrigue saved France from being undone by the victories of that great man; when what St. Simon calls the "*Miracle de Londres*" unexpectedly rescued Louis XIV. from his doom; when, as Frederick II. many years after said, Blenheim, Ramillies, Oudenard, Malplaquet, were all unable to defend him against detraction, and the French King was lost had the intrigues of a mistress of the robes and a bedchamber-woman suffered the Great Captain to remain two years longer in power—Walpole threw up his place with the Duke, and nobly refused to join some shuffling place-seeking Whigs, who were talked over by Harley and St. John to remain under the Tories. This was an offence not to be

forgiven. His aggravation of it, by boldly defending the conduct of Marlborough against the slanderous attacks of the adverse faction, produced the charge against him of corruption while at the War-Office: and he was sent to the Tower upon an accusation of having received 900*l.* from a contractor; was expelled the House of Commons, though never either impeached or prosecuted; and, on being re-elected in the same Parliament, was declared ineligible by a majority of the House.

That Walpole, through the whole of this proceeding, was regarded as the victim of party rancour; that but for the factious spirit of the day he never would have been accused; that nothing can be less decisive against any one than a vote carried by a majority of twelve in a full House of Commons, in which many of the adverse party voted with the accused, and many more refused to vote at all; and that the greatest distrust of their case was shown by the accusers in never venturing to institute judicial proceedings of any kind—may all be easily admitted; and yet there rests a stain upon this part of Walpole's public conduct. For what was his defence? Not to deny that the contractors had given two notes, one of 500 guineas, and the other of as many pounds (of which all but 100 were paid), but to affirm that they were only paid through Walpole's hand to a friend named Mann, whom he had meant to favour by giving him a

share of the contract, and who had agreed to take so much for his proportion of the profit. Mann was dead; the contractors had made the notes payable to Walpole in ignorance of Mann's name, and only knowing he was put upon them as a friend of the Minister; and thus a case of fraud and suspicion appeared against the latter, which the unfortunate accident of the former's death prevented from being clearly removed. Now, that such a proceeding admitting it to have been as Walpole himself describes it, would in our purer days have been deemed most incorrect, nay, sufficient to stain the character of any minister, cannot be doubted. In those days the course of office seems to have sanctioned such impropriety; and that no man was ever injured by having so behaved, any more than the reputations of some French ministers seem to be the worse for the wear they undergo on the Stock Exchange, must be obvious from the fact of Walpole having, in four years after, been placed at the head of the Treasury, though without the place of Premier; and afterwards become, and continued head of the Government for nearly the whole residue of his life, with no diminution of his influence or his estimation in consequence of the transaction at the War-Office, and with hardly any allusion ever made to that remarkable passage of his life during the many years of the most factious opposition which his long administration encountered

when, for want of the materials of attack, it was seriously urged against him that so long a tenure of power by one man was detrimental to the state, if not dangerous to the constitution. Nothing can more strikingly show the great improvement which the principles of public men and the practice of the constitution have undergone during the last hundred years.

When he quitted office, a charge of a different complexion, though connected with pecuniary malversation, was made against the veteran statesman. A sum of between 17,000*l.* and 18,000*l.* had been received by him upon two Treasury orders, two days before he resigned, in February, 1741-2; and to raise the money before the Exchequer forms could be gone through, they were pawned with the officer of the Bank. Now, Walpole never would give a detailed explanation of this transaction, but began to draw up a vindication of himself, alleging that the money was taken, with the King's approbation, for the public service. This paper is extant, but unfinished; and it consists of a clear and distinct statement of the course of the Exchequer in issuing money, from which the inference is, that no one can appropriate any sum to himself in defiance of, or escape from, so many guards and checks. This, however, is a lame defence, when the receipt of the money by him is admitted. The reason offered for his desisting

from the completion of the paper is, that he must either leave it incomplete, or betray the secret service of the Crown. And it may be admitted that, except the suspicion arising from the date of the transaction, there is nothing in it more than an ordinary dealing with secret service money.

The general charge of peculation grounded on the comparison of his expenditure with his means, appears more difficult to meet. With a fortune originally of about 2000*l.* a-year, and which never rose to more than double that amount, he lived with a profusion amounting to extravagance; insomuch that one of his yearly meetings at Houghton, "the Congress" as it was called, in autumn, and which lasted six or eight weeks, and was attended by all his supporters in either House and by their friends, cost him 3000*l.* a-year. His buildings and purchases were estimated at 200,000*l.*, and to this must be added 40,000*l.* for pictures. Now, it is true that for many years he had his own official income of 3000*l.*, with 2000*l.* more of a sinecure, and his family had between 3000*l.* and 4000*l.* more, in places of the like description.* Still, if the expensive style of his living be considered, and that his income was at the very outside only 12,000*l.* clear, including the places of his sons, it is quite impossible to understand how above

* 2000*l.*, granted in reversion only, did not fall in till 1737.

200,000*l*., or nearly twice the average value of his whole private property, could have been accumulated by savings. His incumbrances were only paid off by his wife's fortune; his gains upon the fortunate sale of his South-Sea stock, just before the fall, could hardly account for the sum, although he states, in a letter to one of his friends, that he got a thousand per cent. on what he purchased. On the whole, we must be content to admit that some cloud hangs over this part of his history; and that the generally prevailing attacks against him in this quarter have not been very successfully repulsed.

It has been much more universally believed, that he carried on the Government with a profuse application of the influence derived from patronage; and that the most open bribery entered largely into his plan of parliamentary management. That in those days the men were far less pure who filled the highest places in the State, and that parliamentary as well as ministerial virtue was pitched upon a lower scale than it happily has been, since a prying and fearless press and a watchful public scrutinized the conduct of all persons in any situation of trust, may be at once admitted. It is a truth which has been repeatedly asserted in these pages; and if any conclusive proof of it were required, it is the proof we have in the universally known fact, that the combinations of political par-

now proceed so much more upon principle than upon personal connexions; or that when they are framed upon the latter, the pretext of principle is always used to cloak over arrangements which the improved character of the times will no longer suffer to meet the light. It may be further granted, that the period of Walpole's power was one likely to introduce extraordinary forces into the political system, since the stake was not always a ministry alone, but oftentimes also a crown. When such is the game, measures are readily resorted to, which, in the ordinary measures or matches of politicians, would be reluctantly if at all adopted. That it was usual in those days for men out of office who had voted with the Government during the session, and had obtained no promotion, nor any other favours, to receive sums of money—whether as a token of ministerial gratitude, or as a reimbursement of their expenses in attending parliament—has been so often asserted, and in some instances with such detailed particulars, that it seems to pass for one of the usual modes of House of Commons' management—pretty much like the shares (technically called *slices*) of loans distributed among persons in certain offices.* But we may safely

* Some notion of the free use made in those days of the current coin as a political agent, may be gathered from the fact which Shippen himself related to the celebrated Dr. Middleton. The Prince of Wales, to testify his satisfaction with a speech which the sturdy old Jacobite had made, sent

assert, that Sir Robert Walpole's reputation for having carried on the Government with unprecedented corruption rests on no better ground than his open and honest way of avowing the more accustomed exercise of patronage, and his reflections, rather merry than well considered, on the nature of political men—which gave rise to the notion, that he held statesmen as more venal than others had believed them to be. His famous saying, that "all men have their price," can prove nothing unless "price" be defined; and, if a large and liberal sense is given to the word, the proposition more resembles a truism than a sneer, or an ebullition of official misanthropy. But it has been positively affirmed that the remark never was made; for it is said that an important word is omitted, which wholly changes the sense; and that Walpole only said, in reference to certain factious or profligate adversaries, and their adherents resembling themselves, "all *these* men have their price."* His general tone of sarcasm, when speaking of patriotism and political gratitude,

him 1000*l.* by General Churchill, Groom of his Bedchamber, Shippen refused it. That Walpole himself had known of similar attempts made on Shippen's virtue by the Hanoverian party, is pretty evident from his well-known saying respecting that honest man—"I won't say who is corrupt, but who is not corruptible I will say, and that is Mr. Shippen."

* Coxe's Life of Walpole, vol. i. p. 757.

and others of the more fleeting virtues, is well known. "Patriots," he said, "are easily raised: I have myself made many a one. 'Tis but to refuse an unreasonable demand, and up springs a patriot." So the gratitude of political men he defined to be "a lively sense of favours to come." The opinion of mankind which such speeches as these imported made Pope say,—

> "Would he oblige me? Let me only find
> He does not think me what he thinks mankind."

But if it is certain that his low estimate of public virtue, always openly, perhaps too openly, expressed, tended to lower men's estimate of his own, by making them suppose that he was likely to act upon his notions of those he had to deal with, it is at least equally clear, that the question more fit to be asked before we condemn him of exaggerated misanthropy, is,—Whether or not he very greatly erred in the mean opinion of others which he had formed? No one who has been long the dispenser of patronage among large bodies of his fellow-citizens can fail to see infinitely more numerous instances of sordid, selfish, greedy, ungrateful conduct, than of the virtues to which such hateful qualities stand opposed. Daily examples come before him of the most unfeeling acrimony towards competitors,—the most far-fetched squeamish jealousy of all conflicting claims—unblushing falsehood in both its branches, boasting

and detraction—grasping selfishness in both kinds, greedy pursuit of men's own bread, and cold calculating upon others' blood—the fury of disappointment when that has not been done which it was impossible to do—swift oblivion of all that has been granted—unreasonable expectation of more, only because much has been given—not seldom favours repaid with hatred and ill treatment, as if by this unnatural course the account might be settled between gratitude and pride—such are the secrets of the human heart which power soon discloses to its possessor: add to these, that which, however, deceives no one—the never-ceasing hypocrisy of declaring, that whatever is most eagerly sought is only coveted as affording the means of serving the country, and will only be taken at the sacrifice of individual interest to the sense of public duty; and I desire to be understood here as speaking from my own official experience. It is not believed that in our own times men are at all worse than they were a century ago. Why then should we suppose that one who had been Prime Minister for twenty years, and in office five or six more, had arrived at his notion of human nature from a misanthropical disposition rather than from his personal experience, a longer one than I possessed?

But still more unjust is the inference which is drawn even from a supposition of exaggerated misanthropy, that because he thought less favour-

ably of men that they deserved—therefore he had ministered to their corruptions, and availed himself of their frailties. A far more rigorous test was applied to his conduct than any other minister's ever underwent. His whole proceedings were unsparingly attacked towards the close of his reign, by a motion personally directed against him, supported with the most acrimonious zeal, and preceded by the minutest inquiry into all his weak points. In the House, when he was present to meet the charge of corruption, none was made; after he had ceased to rule, and had left the Commons, a committee sat for weeks to investigate his conduct. The result of the inquiry was the charge already adverted to and a futile statement of his having offered a place to the mayor of a borough, and a living to that magistrate's brother, in order to influence an election. In the great debate on Sandys's motion, a proud testimony to his pure administration of one most important branch of the public service was borne by Sir C. Wager, the First Lord of the Admiralty, who declared that, during the nine years in which he had presided over the Navy, Sir Robert had never once recommended any one for promotion; adding, that had he done so, he, the Admiral, would have thrown up his employments. It may well be doubted if all the successors, either at the Treasury or the Admiralty, have been equally pure in their high offices. Undue inter-

ference with men's parliamentary conduct, by removing those who had voted against him, was of course charged upon him and hardly denied; but it is a proceeding for which ministers are as often praised as blamed; it is accounted the use of legitimate influence to support the government. He loudly denied that ever a threat had been employed by him to deter men from voting according to their conscientious opinions; and when all were challenged to convict him of such a course, none offered to accuse.

Having cleared away the ground from the entanglements with which contemporary prejudices and interests had encumbered it, we may now the more distinctly perceive the merits of this great statesman; and we shall easily admit that he was one of the ablest, wisest, safest rulers who ever bore sway in this country. Inferior to many in qualities that dazzle the multitude, and undervaluing the mere outward accomplishments of English statesmanship, nay, accounting them merits only so far as they conduced to parliamentary and to popular influence—and even much undervaluing their effects in that direction—Walpole yet ranks in the very highest class of those whose unvarying prudence, clear apprehension, fertility of resources to meet unexpected difficulties, firmness of purpose, just and not seemingly exaggerated self-confidence, point them out by common consent as the men qualified

to guide the course of human affairs, to ward off public dangers, and to watch over the peace of empires.* His knowledge was sound and practical; it was, like all his other qualities, for use and not for ornament; yet he lacked nothing of the information which in his day formed the provision of the politician. With men his acquaintance was extensive, and it was profound. His severe judgments, the somewhat misanthropic bias to which reference has been made, never misled him; it only put him on his guard; and it may safely be affirmed that no man ever made fewer mistakes in his intercourse with either adversaries, or friends, or the indifferent world.

From these great qualities it resulted, that a better or a more successful minister could not preside over any country in times of peace; and if we are unable to conjecture how far his sagacity, his boldness, his prudent circumspection, his quickness of apprehension, would have sufficed to make him as great a war minister, we have to thank his wise and virtuous policy, which steadfast in desiring peace, and his matchless skill, which, in the most difficult circumstances, happily securing the execution of his grand purpose, have left us only

* It is gratifying to me that I can conscientiously rank Lord Melbourne among those to whom this description applies in most of its essential points. His faults belong to others; his merits are his own.

to conjecture what the last of national calamities could alone have proved. Nor had he ordinary circumstances to contend against, or ordinary men, in the undeviating pursuit of peace, which made his course so truly useful and so really brilliant. The impatience of France to recover her power and her military reputation, dimmed by the wars of William and of Anne; the Spanish politics, complicated beyond their usual degree of entanglement; Austria, alternately exposed to danger of being conquered, and putting the balance of Europe to hazard by her ambition and her intrigues, never perhaps active or formidable at any other period of her history; Prussia, rising into powerful influence, and menacing Germany with conquest; the great capacity of the Regent Orleans, his inexhaustible resources of address, his manly courage, his profligate character; the habitual insincerity and deep cunning of Fleury, whose pacific disposition, nevertheless, made him Walpole's natural ally—such were the difficulties and the adversaries among which he had to steer the vessel committed to his care; while he had to thwart his councils at home, the King, first the father and then the son, constantly bent upon projects of ambition, reckoning conquest the only occupation worthy of princes, war their natural element, and peace an atmosphere in which they can scarcely

breathe. It may be added to this, and it forms a higher eulogy still on this great statesman, that beside the opposition to his wise and virtuous policy which he encountered among courtiers and colleagues, often misled by the public impatience, not seldom taking their tone from the Sovereign, an opposition even broke out publicly in high and unexpected quarters; for the Chancellor himself, on one occasion, made a warlike harangue on quitting the woolsack to address the Lords.* A constant feeling of national pride and national prejudice was operating against France, in hatred or jealousy of French alliance, in dislike even of peace itself. The deep-rooted prejudices of the English people never set in more strongly against their French neighbours than during Walpole's administration. One-half the country, albeit friends of the Pretender, hated them because they were French; the other half, both because they were French, and because they were adverse to the Hanoverian settlement. The soreness felt ever since the interests of the country and all the fruits of her most glorious actions had been sacrificed

* When Lord Hardwicke, carried away by the national enthusiasm beyond his accustomed moderation and even gentleness of speech, was declaiming with vehemence on the Spanish depredations in 1739, Walpole, standing on the throne, said to those near him, "Bravo, Colonel Yorke! bravo!"

at Utrecht, continued to gall the nation, and make it desirous of regaining by arms the footing which politics had lost; and during the long administration of Walpole there hardly passed a year in which the public eye was not jealously pointed to some quarter of the world, remote or near, as offering a reason why the public voice should be raised for war. It was this general tide of public opinion, as well as the under current of royal and courtly inclination, that Walpole had to stem for many a long year. He did stem it; gallantly he kept the vessel to her course; and he was not driven from the helm by the combined clamours of the mob and intrigues of party, until after he had secured the incalculable blessing of a repose without example for all the great interests committed to his charge.

If after so long a struggle he at length gave way, it must be remembered that the whole country was with the King, and the Court determined upon the Spanish war—one of the greatest blots in English history. Walpole's opposition to it was strenuous, and it was unavailing. He tendered his resignation to the King, and the King refused to accept it, passionately asking his minister "Whether he would desert him at his greatest need?" He then laid his commands on him to remain, and unluckily for his reputation Walpole obeyed. Had he persisted in resigning, he might

not have been able to prevent the catastrophe, but he would have saved himself from the reproach of superintending councils which he no longer directed; he would have been spared four years of continued mortifications; and his name would have remained to all posterity without a single blot to chequer its lustre.

That he had at all times, in the conduct of foreign affairs, fearlessly counselled the Crown, and without the least regard to personal feelings spoken out like a man the whole truth in the closet, where such sounds so seldom are echoed from the walls, no doubt whatever exists.

Early in George I.'s reign he resisted vigorously his pressing desire for measures against Prussia, on account of a Mecklenburg quarrel, in which the Elector of Hanover took a very vehement part: he absolutely refused him money too, and was reproached by the King for breach of his promise. His answer was, though respectful, yet firm, and it was sincere. He would not dispute, he said, the assertion of his Majesty; but if he had ever made such a promise, he was wholly unable to recollect it. To the rapacity of the German favourites he offered so firm a resistance that he was the abhorrence and detestation of them all, both men and women. When George was five years after, bent upon opposing the Czar's attempts in favour of the Duke of Holstein's

views upon the Swedish throne, Walpole plainly and firmly explained his views, refused the sum demanded, and so impressed the King with the wisdom of his pacific policy, that he joined him against all his other ministers, both English and German.—With George II. he held the same honest, independent course; insomuch that at one time the King's displeasure rose to the height of making it impossible for Queen Caroline, his steady supporter, to defend, or even name him in her husband's presence. Her only means of assuaging the Royal anger was to ascribe the minister's peaceful, or, as the King termed it, unworthy and feeble policy, to his brother Horace's influence over his mind on all foreign matters. His remonstrance against "the petty Germanic schemes" of that prince were unremitting; and once he had the courage to tell him how much "the welfare of his own dominions and the happiness of Europe depended on his being a great king rather than a considerable elector!" If such a speech was likely to be little palatable to his Electoral Highness, still less pleasing must have been the remark which the same honest minister ventured to make on one of the many occasions when the implacable hatred of the House of Brunswick towards that of Brandenburg broke out. "Will your Majesty engage in an enterprise which must prove both disgraceful and disadvantageous? Why, Hanover

will be no more than a breakfast to the Prussian army."*

In commemorating the inestimable service which Walpole's pacific policy rendered to his country and the world, strict justice required us to enumerate the obstacles which were offered to his wise and honest course. The other great service which he rendered to his country, was the securing of the Protestant succession;—invaluable, not merely as excluding the plague of the Romish hierarchy and Romish superstition, but as perpetuating the settlement of the Revolution, by which the right of the people to discard their rulers, and to choose such as will protect, not destroy, their liberties, was recognised and acted upon. Then Walpole had to struggle, not only against the intrigues of the exiled family, sometimes openly, always secretly, favoured by France, but against a majority of the landed interest in England, perhaps in Scotland, certainly in Ireland—a majority in

* The only serious objection ever urged against Sir Robert's foreign policy is his suffering the Emperor (Charles VI.) to encounter much hazard from Spain and France rather than actively aid him in his measures, and thus raising France at Austria's expense, has long since faded from the memory of all reflecting men, as a wholly groundless charge. In fact, although Charles was so incensed at our conduct respecting the guarantee of the Pragmatic Sanction, as at times to be in a state of mental derangement, it is certain that by no other course could war with France, and a general war in Europe, have been avoided.

number as well as in value of the whole people. The accession of George I. had added to the weight of the Stuart faction all those whom that prince excluded from his favour, by the policy which he from the first pursued of placing himself at the head of a party. The appearance among us of a foreigner to exercise all the functions of royalty, cooled the loyalty of some natural friends, while it converted many indifferent persons into enemies. Above all, the inroad of a foreign court, foreign mistresses, foreign favourites, all insatiable of English gold as soon as they reached the land of promise, created a degree of discontent, and even of disgust, which mightily increased the prevailing tendency to regret the sway of a native family. In this state of things did Walpole prove himself a match for the extreme difficulties of his position. Through his universal and accurate intelligence, he was constantly aware of every design that was plotting in every corner of Europe, from Stockholm to Naples, by the restless intrigues of the exiled family—aware of them long before they had time for ripening into mischief—aware of them, generally speaking, from the very first movement in any of their most secret councils. There was not, too, a family in the British dominions whose leanings he was not acquainted with, and whose relations, if they had any, with the Pretender, he did not know. This knowledge he

used without ever abusing it: he acted upon it for the safety of the State, without ever once bringing it to bear against the parties, or deriving from it the means of injuring, or of annoying, or of humbling his adversaries. The fact is well known, that he was possessed of proofs which would have ruined more than one of them. Shippen, among others, knew he was in his antagonist's power; but that antagonist never prevented him from honestly pursuing the course of his violent and indeed very factious opposition. It must be further observed, in honour of Walpole's wisdom and firmness, that when the Protestant succession was endangered by foreign movements on the part of the Pretender, his all but invincible repugnance to warlike measures gave way to a provident spirit of wary precaution; and he at once, both in his foreign negotiations with Holland and Germany, and in his vigorous preparations for war with France, showed his resolute determination to defend at all hazards the Revolution settlement, and to punish those who would molest it.

The financial administration of Walpole has been deservedly commended by all but the zealots of a faction. Every one has admitted the great improvements which he introduced into that department. A single measure by which he repealed above a hundred export duties, and nearly forty on imported articles, was only part of his system; which

was clearly before his age, and therefore exposed him to the usual clamour raised against original thinkers on state affairs. He held that raw commodities for manufactures, and articles of necessity for consumption, should be relieved from all taxes; that the impost upon land should be reduced as far as possible; that the revenue collected from the customs, being liable to evasions by contraband trade, should be transferred to the excise; and that articles of luxury should thus be more securely and economically made to bear the burdens of the public expenditure. Every one knows the clamour which the great measure of the excise, the principal illustration of his doctrine, encountered. His reason for relinquishing it is not discreditable to him. He had carried it by majorities always decreasing; and, when finally the majority was under twenty, he gave it up on ascertaining that the people were so generally set against it that the aid of troops would be required to collect it. "No revenue," said this constitutional minister, "ought to be levied in this free country that it requires the sabre and the bayonet to collect." A learned and eminently narrow-minded man, hating Walpole for his Revolution principles, has not scrupled to record his own factious folly in the definition of *Excise* given in his dictionary. Another, a greater, a more factious, and a less honest man, helped, and much less impotently helped, to clamour down the

only other part of Walpole's domestic administration which has ever been made the subject of open attack; though doubtless the extinction of Jacobitism was the real, but hidden, object of all these invectives;—I mean Dean Swift, whose promotion in the church he had prevented, upon discovering the most glaring acts of base perfidy on the part of that unprincipled wit; and whose revenge was taken against the provision made, rather by Walpole's predecessors than himself, for supplying a copper coinage to Ireland, upon terms to the trader perfectly fair, and to the country sufficiently advantageous. The '*Drapier's Letters*,' one of his most famous and by far his most popular production, the act of his life, he was accustomed to confess, upon which rested his whole Irish popularity—and no name ever retained its estimation in the mind of the Irish people nearly so long—urged his countrymen to reject these halfpence; it being, the very reverend author solemnly asserted, "their first duty to God next to the salvation of their souls;" and he asserted, impudently asserted, that the coin was only worth a twelfth of its nominal value. Impudently, I repeat, and why?—Because a careful assay was immediately made at the English mint, by the Master of the Mint, and the result was to ascertain that the standard weight was justly proved. And who was that Master? None other than Sir Isaac Newton. The calumnies and

the ribaldry of the Dean prevailed over the experiments of the illustrious philosopher, and the coinage was withdrawn from circulation.*

The private character of Walpole is familiarly known; and all contemporary writers join in giving the same impression of it. Open, honest, unaffected, abounding in kindness, overflowing with good-humour, generous to profusion, hospitable to a fault, in his manners easy to excess—no wonder that the ruler of the country should have won all hearts by qualities which would have made a private gentleman the darling of society. With these merits, however, were joined defects or weaknesses, which broke in somewhat upon the respect that severe judges require a great statesman to be compassed with round about. His mirth was somewhat free, and apt to be coarse; and he patronised boisterous hilarity in the society which he frequented, and at the merry meetings which were the relaxation of his life. He regarded not the decorum which sober habits sustain; and he followed, in respect of convivial enjoyments, rather the fashion of his own day than of ours. He indulged, too, in gallantry more than beseemed either his station or his years; and he had, like a

* An Irish writer of incoherent mathematical papers in our own day attacks Sir Isaac Newton as a "Saxon," and a "driveller;" and he is not treated in Ireland with universal scorn.

celebrated contemporary * of his, the weakness of affecting to be less strictly virtuous in this respect than he was, and considerably more successful in his pursuit of such recreations. This mixture of honest openness and scorn of hypocrisy, with some little tendency to boast of fortune's favours, made the only trait like an exception to the wholly plain and unaffected nature of the man. Nor is it easy to define with accuracy how much was affectation, and how much ought to be set down to the account of a merely joyous and frank temper. The delight which all persons, of whatever age or cast, took in his society, is admitted by every witness.

Of Sir Robert Walpole's character as an orator, or rather a great master of debate, it is of course at this distance of time, and with so little help from the parliamentary history of the day, not easy to speak with confidence or discrimination; because we must rely on the estimate formed by others, and handed down to us, with few indeed of the materials on which their judgment rested. That he despised not only all affectation and all refinements, but all the resources of the oratorical art beyond its great "origin and fountain," strong

* Louis XIV., when some one was recounting his nephew the Duc d'Orléans's (afterwards Regent's) foibles and vices, said, in language much eulogized by St. Simon, who relates the anecdote,—"Encore est-il fanfaron de vices qu'il n'a point."

sense, clear ideas, anxious devotion to the object in view, carrying the audience along with the speaker, may well be supposed from the manly and plain, the homely and somewhat coarse, character of his understanding. Eminently a man of business, he came down to Parliament to do the business of the country, and he did it. He excelled in lucid statement, whether of an argument or of facts; he met his antagonist fearlessly, and went through every part of the question; he was abundantly ready at reply and at retort; he constantly preserved his temper, was even well-natured and gay in the midst of all his difficulties; and possessed his constitutional good-humour, with his unvaried presence of mind, in the thickest fire of the debate, be it ever so vehement, ever so personal, as entirely as if he were in his office, or his study, or the common circle of his friends. He was, too, a lively, and not ever a tiresome, speaker; nor did any man, hardly Lord North himself, enjoy the position —to any debater very enviable, to a minister the most enviable of all—that of a constant favourite with the House which it was his vocation to lead. Such is the general account left us of his speaking, and on this all witnesses are agreed.

It may be added, that his style was homely, for the most part; and his manner, though animated and lively, yet by no means affecting dignity. In

figures of speech he but rarely indulged, though his language seems to have been often distinguished by point. His personal retorts, though hardly ever offensive, were often distinguished by much force of invective and considerable felicity of sarcasm. His description of the factious and motley opposition, moved by the dark intrigues of Bolingbroke, and his portrait of that wily and subtle adversary, appears to have been a passage of great merit, as far as the conception went; for of the execution we cannot in fairness permit ourselves to judge from the only record of it which is preserved, the meagre parliamentary remains of those days. The excellence of this celebrated speech, which eventually drove Bolingbroke abroad, is greatly enhanced by the important circumstance of its being an unpremeditated reply to a very elaborate attack upon himself, in which Sir William Windham had feigned a case applicable to Walpole's, and under that cover drawn a severe portrait of him.

Notwithstanding the general plainness and simplicity of his style, some speeches remain distinguished by a highly ornamental and even figurative manner; that, for example, in opposition to the Peerage Bill, in which he spoke of the antients having erected the temple of honour behind the temple of virtue, to show by what avenues it must be approached; whereas we were called

upon to provide that its only avenue should be an obscure family pedigree, or the winding-sheet of some worthless ancestor. Some idea of his more animated and successful efforts may be formed, and it is a very high one, from the admirable exordium of his speech in reply to the long series of attacks upon him which Sandys's motion for his removal, in 1741, introduced. There remain of this speech only his own minutes, yet even from these its great merits appear clear. "Whatever is the conduct of England, I am equally arraigned. If we maintain ourselves in peace, and seek no share in foreign transactions, we are reproached with tameness and pusillanimity. If we interfere in disputes, we are called Don Quixotes and dupes to all the world. If we contract (give) guarantees, it is asked why the nation is wantonly burdened. If guarantees are declined, we are reproached with having no allies."

In general, his manner was simple, and even familiar, with a constant tendency towards gaiety. But of this his finest speech it is recorded, that the delivery was most fascinating, and of a dignity rarely surpassed. In vehemence of declamation he seldom indulged, and anything very violent was foreign to his habits at all times. Yet sometimes he deviated from this course; and once spoke under such excitement (on the motion respecting

Lord Cadogan's conduct, 1717) that the blood burst from his nose, and he had to quit the House. But for this accidental relief, he probably would have afforded a singular instance of a speaker, always good-humoured and easy in his delivery beyond almost any other, dropping down dead in his declamation, from excess of vehemence: and at this time he was between forty and fifty years of age.

But before proceeding to Walpole's great adversary, Bolingbroke, here I may pause to state why so large, as it may appear so disproportioned, a space has been allotted to Walpole, the centre figure in this group. It is because there is nothing more wholesome, for both the people and their rulers, than to dwell upon the excellence of those statesmen whose lives have been spent in furthering the useful, the sacred work of peace. The thoughtless vulgar are ever prone to magnify the brilliant exploits of arms, which dazzle ordinary minds, and prevent any account being taken of the cost and the crime that so often are hid in the covering of success. All merit of that shining kind is sure of passing current for more than it is really worth; and the eye is turned indifferently, and even scornfully, upon the unpretending virtue of the true friend to his species, the minister who devotes all his cares to stay the worst of crimes that can be committed, the last of calamities that

can be endured, by man. To hold up such men as Walpole in the face of the world as the model of a wise, a safe, an honest ruler, becomes the most sacred duty of the impartial historian; and, as has been said of Cicero and of eloquence by a great critic, that statesman may feel assured that he has made progress in the science to which his life is devoted, who shall heartily admire the public character of Walpole.

LONDON

LORD BOLINGBROKE.

FEW men, whose public life was so short, have filled a greater space in the eyes of the world during his own times than Lord Bolingbroke, or left behind them a more brilliant reputation. Not more than fifteen years elapsed between his first coming into Parliament and his attainder; during not more than ten of these years was he brought forward in the course of its proceedings; and yet as a statesman and an orator his name ranks among the most famous in our history, independently of the brilliant literary reputation which places him among the first classics of what we generally call our Augustan age. Much of his rhetorical fame may certainly be ascribed to the merit of his written works; but had he never composed a page, he would still have come down to our times as one of the most able and eloquent men of whom this country ever could boast. As it is upon his eloquence that his great reputation now rests, as upon that mainly was built his political influence, and as upon it alone any commendation of his political character must pro-

ceed, we shall do well to begin by examining the foundation before we look at the superstructure.

And here the defect, so often to be deplored in contemplating the history of modern oratory, attains its very height. Meagre as are the materials by which we can aim at forming to ourselves some idea of the eloquence of most men who flourished before our own day; scanty as are the remains even of the speakers who figured during the Seven Years' War, and the earlier part of the American contest; when we go back to the administration of Walpole, we find those vestiges to be yet more thinly scattered over the pages of our history; and in Queen Anne's time, during which alone Bolingbroke spoke, there are absolutely none. It is correct to affirm that of this great orator—one of the very greatest, according to all contemporary history, that ever exercised the art,—and these accounts are powerfully supported by his writings —not a spoken sentence remains, any more than of the speeches of Demades,* one of the most eloquent of the Greeks, any more than of Cicero's translation from Demosthenes, or the lost works of Livy and of Tacitus. The contemplation of this chasm it was that made Mr. Pitt, when musing upon its brink, and calling to mind all that might

* The fragment given in some *codices* as his appears of more than doubtful authenticity. The finest portion is taken from a very well-known passage in Demosthenes.

be fancied of the orator from the author, and all that traditional testimony had handed down to us, sigh after a "speech of Bolingbroke,"—desiderating it far more than the restoration of all that has perished of the treasures of the ancient world.

But, although we may well join in these unavailing regrets, attempt vainly to supply the want by our conjectures, and confess our ignorance of the peculiar character of his oratory, the fact of its mighty power is involved in no doubt at all. The concurring testimony of all parties leaves this a matter absolutely certain. The friends and supporters of Walpole, to whom his whole life was hostile, all his acts, his speeches, and his writings, are here agreed with the friends, the associates of Bolingbroke; and no diversity of shade marks the pictures which have come down to us from the hand of the antagonist and of the panegyrist. His most intimate companion, Dean Swift, may be suspected of partiality when he represents him as "having in his hands half the business of the nation, and the applause of the whole;" but when he tells us that "understanding men of both parties asserted he had never been equalled in speaking," and that he had "an invincible eloquence, with a most agreeable elocution," we can find no fault with the exaggeration, for this account falls short of what others have told. In truth, his impression upon the men of his own age may well be con-

ceived to have been prodigious, when we reflect that hardly any English orator can now be cited as having flourished before his time. This circumstance might even detract from the weight of contemporary testimony in his favour, if we had not more specific reasons for believing implicitly in it than the mere concurrence of general reputation.

He had received at Eton a complete classical education; rather, let us say, had laid there the foundation of one, which, like all others who have shone as scholars, he afterwards completed. But his attention was more bestowed upon the remains of Rome than of Athens; he was extensively and thoroughly acquainted with Latin writers, as indeed his frequent quotation of passages little known may show. With Greek literature he seems not to have been familiar; nor can the reader of his own works fail to perceive that his style is not so redolent of the flowers which grew in the more rigorous climate of the Attic school. With the authors of the age immediately preceding his own —the true Augustan age of English letters—he was well acquainted; and, although his style is quite his own, none being more original, it is impossible to doubt that he had much studied and much admired (as who can stint himself in admiring?) the matchless prose of Dryden—rich, various, natural, animated, pointed, lending itself to the logical and the narrative, as well as the

pathetic and the picturesque, never baulking, never cloying, never wearying. To the literature of ancient and modern times he added a consummate knowledge of their history, and indeed appears of this to have made his principal study; for of natural science he was no professor, and his metaphysical writings have gained but little fame. Yet that he was a profound moralist, had thoroughly studied the sources of human action, was well acquainted with the nature and habits of the mind and had an understanding adapted by its natural acuteness to take part in the most subtle discussions, as well as habituated to them by study it would be absurd to doubt, merely because his metaphysical speculations have been unsuccessful as it would be the height of unworthy prejudice to deny it, merely because his opinions are tinged with scepticism, and because an unhappy veil of infidelity darkened his life, while it shrouded his posthumous works. They who look down upon even the purely ethical and purely metaphysical writings of Bolingbroke would do well to show us a statesman or any orator, except perhaps Cicero who in any age has brought to the senate the same resources of moral science which even the failure of Bolingbroke as a professed author on these subjects prove him to have possessed; and it is hardly necessary to remark how vast an access of force to his eloquence, whether in its argu-

ative, its pathetic, or its declamatory department, would have been gained by even far less skill, capacity, or practice, than he had as a moral philosopher, a student of the nature of the mind, or an expert logician.

Accordingly, when all these accomplishments, joined to his strong natural sagacity, his penetrating acuteness, his extraordinary quickness of apprehension, a clearness of understanding against which sophistry set itself up in vain, as the difficulties of the most complicated subject in vain opposed his industry and his courage; with a fancy rich, lively, various beyond that of most men, a wit exuberant and sparkling, a vehemence of passion belonging to his whole temperament, even to his physical powers—came to be displayed before the assembly which he was to address; and when the mighty "*Armamentaria Cœli*" were found under the command of one whose rich endowments of mind, and whose ample stores of acquired virtue, resided in a person of singular grace, animated a countenance at once beautiful and expressive, and made themselves heard in the strains of an unrivalled voice, it is easy to comprehend how vast, how irresistible must have been their impression. That is easy; but unhappily all we can now obtain is the apprehension that it must have been prodigious, without being able ourselves to penetrate the veil that hides it, or to form any very distinct

notion of its peculiar kind. For the purpose o approximating to this knowledge, it is necessary that we should now consider the style of his writte discourse; because, although in general the dif ference is great between the same man's writing and his oratory (witness the memorable exampl of Mr. Fox, who, however, increased the diversit by writing on a system, and a bad one)—yet i some this difference is much less than in others and there seems abundant reason to believe that i Bolingbroke's case it was as inconsiderable as i any other.

If we inquire on what models Bolingbrok formed his style, the result will be, as in the cas of all other great and original writers, that he w rather imbued with the general taste and relish former authors than imitated any of them. Th he had filled his mind with the mighty exempla of antiquity is certain—for, though of Greek had small store, with the Latin classics he w familiar, and habitually so, as his allusions and quotations constantly show. As might be suppos in one of his strong sense, knowledge of man a of men, as well as free habits, Horace seems have been his favourite; but the historians a are plainly of his intimate society. Among mod authors he appears to have had Dryden's prc and the admirable composition of Shaftesbu most in his mind. The resemblance of man

may indeed be frequently found with these excellent models—of whom the former, with Bolingbroke himself, may perhaps be admitted to stand at the head of all our great masters of diction. But though in vigour, in freedom, occasionally in rhythm also, in variety that never palls nor ever distracts from the subject, in copiousness that speaks an exhaustless fountain for its source, nothing can surpass Dryden; yet must it be confessed that Bolingbroke is more terse, more condensed where closeness is required, more epigrammatic, and of the highest order of epigram, which has its point not in the words but the thoughts; and when, even in the thoughts, it is so subdued as to be minister of the composer, and not his master—helping the explication, or the argument, or the invective, without appearing to be the main purpose of the composition. In another and a material respect he also greatly excels Dryden; there is nothing flowery in any part of his writings; he always respects his reader, his subject, and himself, too much to throw out matter in a crude and half-finished form, at least as far as diction is concerned: for the structure of his works is anything rather than finished and systematic. Even his tract 'On Parties,' which he calls a *Dissertation*, though certainly his most elaborate work, perhaps also the most admirably written, has as little of an orderly methodical exposition of principles, or statement

of reasonings, as can well be imagined. It is a series of letters addressed to a political paper, abounding in acute, sagacious, often profound reflections, with forcible arguments, much happy illustration, constant references to history, many attacks upon existing parties; but nothing can be less like what we commonly term a Dissertation. The same remark applies to almost all his writings. He is clear, strong, copious; he is never methodical; the subject is attacked in various ways; it is taken up by the first end that presents itself, and it is handled skilfully, earnestly, and strikingly, in many of its parts; it cannot be said to be thoroughly gone through, though it be powerfully gone into; in short, it is discussed as if a speaker of great power, rather than a writer, were engaged upon it; and accordingly nothing can be more clear than that Bolingbroke's works convey to us the idea of a prodigious orator rather than of a very great and regular writer. When Mr. Burke asked, "Who now reads Bolingbroke?" he paved the way for another equally natural exclamation "What would we not give to hear him?" and this was Mr. Pitt's opinion, when, as has already been observed, the question being raised in conversation about the *desiderata* most to be lamented, and one said the lost books of Livy, another those of Tacitus, a third a Latin tragedy—he at once declared for "A Speech of Bolingbroke." Nor is it this

method—rather the want of method—the easy and natural order in which the topics follow one another, not taken up on a plan, but each, as it were, growing out of its immediate predecessor, that makes his writings so closely resemble spoken compositions. The diction is most eminently that of oratorical works. It is bold, rapid, animated, natural, and racy, yet pointed and correct, bearing the closest scrutiny of the critic, when submitted to the eye in the hour of calm judgment; but admirably calculated to fill the ear, and carry away the feelings in the moment of excitement. If Bolingbroke spoke as he wrote, he must have been the greatest of modern orators, as far as composition goes; for he has the raciness and spirit, occasionally even the fire, perhaps not the vehemence of Fox, with richer imagery, and far more correct diction; the accurate composition of Pitt, with infinitely more grace and variety; the copiousness, almost the learning, and occasionally the depth of Burke, without his wearily elaborate air; for his speech never degenerates for an instant into dissertation, which Burke's scarcely ever avoids.

To characterise his manner of speaking from his writings would be difficult and tedious, if possible. There are in these, however, passages which plainly bear the impress of his extraordinary oratorical powers, and which, if spoken, must have produced

an indescribable effect. Take a noble passage from the '*Dissertation on Parties.*'

"If King Charles had found the nation plunged in corruption; the people choosing their representatives for money, without any other regard; and these representatives of the people, as well as the nobility, reduced by luxury to beg the unhallowed alms of a court, or to receive, like miserable hirelings, the wages of iniquity from a minister; if he had found the nation, I say, in this condition (which extravagant supposition one cannot make without horror), he might have dishonoured her abroad, and impoverished and oppressed her at home, though he had been the weakest prince on earth, and his ministers the most odious and contemptible men that ever presumed to be ambitious. Our fathers might have fallen into circumstances which compose the quintessence of political misery. They might have sold their birthright for porridge, which was their own. They might have been bubbled by the foolish, bullied by the fearful, and insulted by those whom they despised. They would have deserved to be slaves, and they might have been treated as such. When a free people crouch, like camels, to be loaded, the next at hand, no matter who, mounts them, and they soon feel the whip and the spur of their tyrant, whether prince or minister, who resembles the devil in many respects; particularly

in this—he is often both the tempter and the tormentor. He makes the criminal, and he punishes the crime."

Another fine passage, admirably fitted for spoken eloquence by its rapidity, its point, its fulness of matter, each *hit* rising above the last, may be taken from the celebrated Dedication to Sir Robert Walpole :—

"Should a minister govern, in various instances of domestic and foreign management, ignorantly, weakly, or even wickedly, and yet pay this reverence and bear this regard to the constitution, he would deserve certainly much better quarter, and would meet with it too from every man of sense and honour, than a minister who should conduct the administration with great ability and success, and should at the same time procure and abet, or even connive at, such indirect violations of the rules of the constitution as tend to the destruction of it, or even at such evasions as tend to render it useless. A minister who had the ill qualities of both these, and the good ones of neither; who made his administration hateful in some respects, and despicable in others; who sought that security by ruining the constitution, which he had forfeited by dishonouring the government; who encouraged the profligate and seduced the unwary to concur with him in this design, by affecting to explode all public spirit, and to ridicule every form of our con-

stitution; such a minister would be looked upon most justly as the shame and scourge of his country; sooner or later he would fall without pity, and it is hard to say what punishment would be proportionable to his crimes."

Lastly, take this instance of another kind, but alike fitted for the senate:—

"The flowers they gather at Billingsgate to adorn and entwine their productions shall be passed over by me without any explication. They assume the privilege of watermen and oysterwomen: let them enjoy it in that good company, and exclusively of all other persons. They cause no scandal; they give no offence; they raise no sentiment but contempt in the breasts of those they attack: and it is to be hoped, for the honour of those whom they would be thought to defend, that they raise, by their low and dirty practice, no other sentiment in them. But there is another part of their proceedings which may be attributed by malicious people to you, and which deserves, for that reason alone, some place in this Dedication, as it might be some motive to the writing of it. When such authors grow scurrilous, it would be highly unjust to impute their scurrility to any prompter, because they have in themselves all that is necessary to constitute a scold—ill-manners, impudence, a foul mouth, and a fouler heart. But when they menace, they rise a note higher. They cannot do this in

their own names. Men may be apt to conclude, therefore, that they do it in the name, as they affect to do it on the behalf, of the person in whose cause they desire to be thought retained."

The gracefulness of Bolingbroke's manner has been so greatly extolled by his contemporaries, that we can hardly believe his eloquence to have risen into the vehemence ascribed to it by one who had studied his works more than other men, for he had written an excellent imitation of his style. Mr. Burke speaks of that rapid torrent of "an impetuous and overbearing eloquence for which he is justly admired," as well as "the rich variety of his imagery."* There is assuredly nothing in his style to discountenance this notion; and, as Burke lived much nearer Bolingbroke's times than we do, there can be little doubt that his panegyric is correct. But all accounts agree in describing the external qualities (so to speak) of his oratory as perfect. A symmetrically beautiful and animated countenance, a noble and dignified person, a sonorous and flexible voice, action graceful and correct, though unstudied, gave his delivery an inexpressible charm with those who witnessed his extraordinary displays as spectators or critics; and armed his eloquence with resistless effect over those whom it was intended to sway, or persuade, or control. If the concurring accounts of witnesses, and the testimony to his merits borne by his writings, may be

* Preface to the Vindication of Natural Society (*sub fine*).

trusted, he must be pronounced to stand, upon the whole, at the head of modern orators. There may have been more measure and matured power in Pitt, more fire in the occasional bursts of Chatham, more unbridled vehemence, more intent reasoning in Fox, more deep-toned declamation in passages of Sheridan, more learned imagery in Burke, more wit and humour in Canning;* but, as a whole, and taking in all rhetorical gifts, and all the orator's accomplishments, no one, perhaps hardly the union of several of them, can match what we are taught by tradition to admire in Bolingbroke's spoken eloquence, and what the study of his works makes us easily believe to be true.

In considering Bolingbroke's character, there is even less possibility than in ordinary cases of separating the politic from the natural capacity: less pretence for making the distinction, so often and

* It is inconsistent with the plan of this work to treat of living speakers; and this imposes a restraint in illustrating by comparison. For who can fail to recollect that the utmost reach of eloquence has been attained by those who survive? Who can doubt that Lord Plunket will, in after times, be classed with the very greatest orators; and that his style, of the highest excellence, is also eminently original, entirely his own? It affords the most perfect study to those whom its perfection may not make despair. In confining the mention of Mr. Canning to wit and humour, it must only be understood that we speak of the thing defective in Bolingbroke, not as confining Mr. C.'s excellence to that department; he was a very considerable orator in other respects.

so incorrectly made between that which is becoming or honest in political life, and that which is virtuous or pure in private. It is seldom, indeed, that the lax morality can be tolerated, or even understood, which relieves the general reputation of a man from the censure naturally descending upon it, by citing personal merit as a kind of set-off to political delinquency; seldom that there is any kind of sense in believing a man honest who has only betrayed his colleague, because he never cheated his friend; or in acquitting of knavery the statesman who has sacrificed his principles for preferment, merely because he has never taken a bribe to break some private trust, embezzled a ward's money, sold a daughter or a wife. Nothing can be more shadowy than such distinctions, nothing more arbitrary than such lines of demarcation. To say that a dishonest, or sordid, or treacherous politician may be a virtuous man, because he has never exposed himself to prosecution for fraud, or forgery, or theft, is near akin to the fantastical morality which should acquit a common offender of horse-stealing because he had never been charged with burglary. It must, however, be confessed, that as there are some cases of political offences much worse than others, so in these the impossibility of making such distinctions becomes more apparent; and both the kind and the amount of the crimes charged upon Bolingbroke seem to point

him out as an instance in which all contrast between public and private character signally fails. If, then, we advert to his conduct under these two heads, it is only in order to treat of different kinds of delinquency in separation and in succession.

He came into Parliament as a declared Tory; the ancient families from which he sprung, the St. Johns and the Ports, had ever been of that faith. In the ministry which the Queen formed during the latter years of her reign from the members of that party, he held a conspicuous place; having been Secretary of State and a leading supporter, first in the Commons, then in the Lords. He began under Harley, and to Harley he devoted himself; to Harley he seemed firmly attached. Soon there broke out symptoms of jealousy: these occurred on the promotion of his chief to an earldom, while he only was made a viscount himself; the want of a blue riband completed the philosopher's chagrin; the incapacity, real or fancied, of his former patron, called down the moralist's vengeance instead of exciting his compassion or claiming his help; and the latter part of his official life was passed in continually renewed and continually failing attempts to supplant and to ruin him. But we know the interior of the cabinet too little, are too superficially acquainted with personal details to be prepared for pronouncing a safe judgment upon the degree of blame which he thus earned: possibly

he only shared it with the other party; not impossibly the whole might be Harley's. Upon the schemes in which he was engaged for restoring the Stuarts, undoing the work of the Revolution, exposing the civil and religious liberties of the country to the most imminent peril, and effecting this change through the horrors of civil war, possibly aggravated by foreign invasion, there can exist no doubt whatever. We shall first advert to the result of the evidence upon this head; and then consider his case, as made by himself, to see how far he can be said to stand acquitted even upon his own showing.

That some at least of the Queen's Tory ministers, and even the Queen herself, were desirous of restoring the exiled family, and setting aside the Act of Settlement extorted from the same party by King William, there can be no doubt. Bolingbroke always professed himself the fast friend of the Revolution, and cited his having helped to introduce the Act of Settlement in proof of it. But the coldness and the sluggishness of that proceeding, on the part of himself and the King's Tory ministers, is well known; nor does any one now doubt that they endeavoured to obstruct the bill in its progress, until the decease of the King should interrupt or supersede the measure. But Bolingbroke's denial of any design favourable to the Pretender, until after his attainder and during his

exile, was constant and peremptory. Nor did any probabilities the other way suffice to convince men how false his assertions were, until the publication of Marshal Berwick's 'Memoirs' at once disclosed the truth; and then we had a clear statement of his treason having commenced during the Queen's life-time—a statement under the hand of the very person through whom he has himself said that his communications to and from the Pretender uniformly passed, at the period when he confesses himself to have been engaged in the Stuart councils. There is an end, therefore, of his defence against the main body of the accusation, and it is ended by a witness to whose testimony he has precluded himself from objecting. But this is not all. His own conduct bears testimony against him as loudly as his own witness. Upon the Queen's demise, Harley, Ormond, and himself, being vehemently suspected of treasonable practices, were accused in Parliament constitutionally, legally, regularly, formally. What was the course pursued by the three? Harley, conscious of innocence, like a guiltless man remained, awaited his impeachment, faced his accusers, met his trial, and was unanimously acquitted. Nor does any one now believe, nor did any but they whom faction blinded then believe, that he had any share at all in the intrigue set on foot to restore the Stuarts. Ormond and Bolingbroke fled; they would not stand their trial

Now the former never denied his accession to the treasonable plot—never having indeed professed any favourable disposition towards the Revolution Settlement; the latter, though he pretended to deny his guilt, yet gave none but the most frivolous reasons to explain his flight. He could only say that so odious to him had his former friend, his original patron, become, that he could not think of submitting to be coupled or mixed up with him in any matter or in any manner. So that his hatred of another prevailed over his love of himself—his inveterate dislike of his neighbour over the natural desire of self-defence; his repugnance for an enemy made him reject life itself when the terms on which it was offered involved the act of taking the same precaution with his rival to secure his safety; and, rather than defend his honour, clear his character from the worst of accusations, in the way common to all men, and which one whom he disliked had, like all innocent men, pursued, he preferred wholly abandoning the defence of his reputation, and passing with all the world for a false traitor. It is not often that a guilty person can make an honest-looking defence; not seldom that the excuses offered by suspected culprits work their conviction. But never yet did any one, when charged with a crime, draw the noose around his own neck more fatally than Bolingbroke did, when he resorted to so wretched an explanation of the act, which,

unexplained, was a confession—the flight from his accusers. If that act, standing alone, was fatal to the supposition of his innocence, the defence of it was, if possible, more effectual to his condemnation.

But his subsequent proceedings, and his own general defence of his whole conduct, are still more destructive of his fame. As soon as he fled, his attainder passed, and passed, be it observed, without a dissenting voice through both Houses—a circumstance demonstrative of the universal impression entertained of his guilt; and a thing which never could have happened to a man so lately minister, among his own supporters and his own party, upon any the lowest estimate of public virtue or political friendship, had a doubt existed regarding his conduct, or had he ventured even to deny the charges in private communications with his adherents. He arrived in France: without a day's delay he put himself in communication with the Pretender and his agents; and he at once accepted under him the office of his Secretary of State. Here then let us pause, and ask if this step was consistent with the charge against him being groundless. A statesman, professing inviolable attachment to the Revolution Settlement, is accused of treasonable correspondence with the exiled family; he flies, and because he has been, as he alleges, falsely accused of that offence, he immediately proceeds to commit it. Suppose he made

the only feasible excuse for running away from his accusers—that the public prejudices against him were so strong as to deprive him of all chance of a fair trial—did he not know that all such prepossessions are in their nature, in the nature of the people, in the nature of truth and justice, temporary, and pass away? Then would not innocence, if acting under the guidance of common sense and an ordinary knowledge of mankind, have waited, more or less patient, more or less tranquil, for the season of returning calm, when justice might be surely expected? But could anything be more inconsistent with all supposition of innocence than instantly to commit the offence in question, because there was a delay of justice, through the prevalence of popular prejudice? What would be said of any man's honesty who had fled from a charge of theft which he denied, and feared to meet, because supported by perjured witnesses, if he instantly took to the highway for his support? If, indeed, he says that the attainder gave him a right to take part against the government, then it must be observed that some months were allowed him by the act to return and take his trial, and that he never even waited to see whether, before the given time expired, men's minds should become so calm as to let him safely encounter the charge.

But another and a higher ground must be taken. Who can maintain that it is the part of an honest

man, to say nothing of a patriotic statesman, to leave the party of his country, and go over to her enemies, the instant he has been maltreated, however grievously, however inexcusably by her—that is, by a party of his enemies who happen to guide her councils? Is it the part of public virtue—but is it the part of common honesty—to side with the enemy and war with our own country because she or her rulers have oppressed us? Then, if all men are agreed that this affords no justification for such treason, how much worse is his crime who would plunge his country into civil war, to wreak his vengeance on the faction that has oppressed and banished him? The Revolution Settlement had obtained Bolingbroke's deliberate approbation: no man has spoken more strongly in its favour; it was the guarantee, according to him, of both civil and religious liberty. Yet against this settlement he declares war—to subvert it he exerts all his powers, merely because the Whig party had maltreated himself, and created against him a prejudice he was afraid to face. Nay more—be the settlement the very best conceivable scheme of government or not, it was established, and could only be upset by civil commotion, and probably required the aid of foreign invasion to overthrow it. To darken the face of his native land with those worst of all plagues was his desire, that he might take his revenge on his enemies, and trample upon them, raised to power

under tne restored dynasty of the bigoted and tyrannical Stuarts! This is not the charge made against Bolingbroke by his adversaries; it is not the sentence pronounced upon him by an impartial public; it is the case made for himself by himself, and it is as complete a confession of enormous guilt as ever man made. It further betokens a mind callous to all right feelings; an understanding perverted by the sophistries of selfish ingenuity; a heart in which the honest, with the amiable sentiments of our nature, have been extinguished by the habitual contemplations familiar to a low ambition.

From a man who could thus act in sharing the Pretender's fortunes, and could thus defend his conduct, little honesty could be expected to the party with which he had now ranged himself. The charge of having neglected the interests of the Pretender, and done less than he ought to further the rebellion in 1715, made against him by the thoughtless zeal, the gross ignorance, the foolish presumption of the Jacobites, and to which is almost entirely confined the defence of himself, in his celebrated, and for composition justly celebrated, 'Letter to Sir William Wyndham,' was plainly groundless. It was likely, indeed, to be groundless; for the interests of Bolingbroke, all the speculations of his ambition, all the revengeful passions of his nature, were enlisted to make him zealous in good earnest for the success of the rebellion; and to aid

that enterprise, nowever much he might despair of it, he exerted his utmost resources of intrigue, of solicitation, of argument. But as soon as it had failed, the Pretender probably yielded to the misrepresentations of Bolingbroke's enemies, possibly lent an ear to the vulgar herd of detractors, who could not believe a man was in earnest to serve the Prince because he refused, like them, to shut his eyes against the truth, and believe their affairs flourishing when they were all but desperate. The intrigues of Lord Mar worked upon a mind so prepared; and advantage being taken of a coarse though strong expression of disrespect towards the Prince, he was induced to dismiss by far his ablest supporter, and take that wily old Scotchman as his minister.

There was the usual amount of royal perfidy in the manner of his dismissal, and not much more. At night he squeezed his hand, and expressed his regard for the man whom in the morning he dismissed by a civil message requiring the seals of his office, and renewing his protestations of gratitude for his services, and confidence in his attachment. Bolingbroke appears to have felt this deeply. He instantly left the party, and for ever; but he affects to say that he had previously taken the determination of retiring from all connexion with the service as soon as the attempt of 1715 should be made and should fail. Assuming this to be true,

which it probably is not, he admits that his course was to depend, not on any merits of the Stuart cause, not on any view of British interests, not on any vain, childish, romantic notions of public duty and its dictates, but simply upon his own personal convenience, which was alone to be consulted, and which was to exact his retirement unless the dynasty were restored—which was, of course, to sanction his continuance in the service in the event of success crowning the Prince, and enabling Bolingbroke to be minister of England. But whatever might have been his intentions in the event of the Pretender retaining him as his Secretary of State, his dismissal produced an instantaneous effect. All regard for the cause which he had made his own was lost in the revenge for his deprivation of place under its chief; and he lost not a moment in reconciling himself with the party whom he had betrayed, and deserted, and opposed. To obtain an amnesty for the present, and the possibility of promotion hereafter, no professions of contrition were too humble, no promises of amendment too solemn, no display of zeal for the Government which he had done his utmost to destroy too extravagant. To a certain extent he was believed, because the Pretender's cause was now considered desperate, and Bolingbroke's interest coincided with the duty of performing his promise. To a certain extent, therefore, his suit was successful, and he was suffered to return home and resume his property with his rank; but

the doors of Parliament and office were kept closed against him, and the rest of his life was spent in unavailing regrets that he had ever left his country, and as unavailing rancour against the great and honest minister who had shown him mercy without being his dupe—who had allowed him to make England a dwelling-place once more, without letting him make it once more the sport of his unprincipled ambition.

Here, again, regarding his final abandonment of the Pretender, we have his own account, and on that alone we are condemning him. Because the Parliament of the Brunswicks attainted him when he confessed his guilt by his flight, he joined the standard of the Stuarts. It was covered with irremediable defeat, and he resolved to quit it. But meanwhile the master into whose service he came as a volunteer chose to take another minister: therefore Bolingbroke deserted him, and deserted him when his misfortunes were much more unquestionable than his ingratitude. The pivot of all his actions, by all that he urges in his own behalf, was his individual, private, personal, interest. To this consideration all sense of principle was sacrificed, all obligation of duty subjected; whatever his revenge prompted, whatever his ambition recommended, that he deemed himself justified in doing, if not called upon to do.

Bolingbroke's 'Idea of a Patriot King' certainly differed exceedingly from his idea of a Patriot Sub-

ject. The duty of the former, according to him, required a constant sacrifice of his own interests to the good of his country; the duty of the latter he considered to be a constant sacrifice of his country to himself. The one was bound on no account ever to regard either his feelings or his tastes, the interests of his family, or the powers of his station; the other was justified in regarding his own gratification, whether of caprice, or revenge, or ambition, as the only object of his life. Between the ruler and his subjects there was in this view no kind of reciprocity; for all the life of self-sacrifice spent by the one was to be repaid by a life of undisturbed and undisguised self-seeking in the other. But if the guarantee which his system proposed to afford for the performance of the patriot king's duties, or for making patriots of kings, was somewhat scanty and precarious, not to say fantastical, ample security was held out for the patriot citizen's part being well filled. The monarch was enticed to a right and moderate use of power by clothing him with prerogative, and trusting rather to that not being abused than to influence not being very extravagantly employed; the secret for moderating the love of dominion was to bestow it without any restraint; the protection given to the people against the prerogative of the prince was to deliver them over into his hands; the method proposed for putting the wolf out of conceit with blood was to throw

the lamb to him bound. If this did not seem a very hopeful mode of attaining the object, a very likely way to realise the 'Idea of a Patriot King,' the plan for producing Patriot Citizens in unlimited supply was abundantly certain. Whatever defects the one scheme might disclose in the knowledge of human nature, whatever ignorance of human frailty, none whatever could be charged upon the other; for it appealed to the whole selfish feelings of the soul, made each man the judge of what was most virtuous for him to do, and to guide his judgment furnished him with a pleasing canon enough—he had only to follow his own inclinations whithersoever they might lead. Such was the system of Bolingbroke upon the relative duties of sovereigns and subjects—a system somewhat more symmetrically unfolded as regards the former; but, touching the latter, fully exemplified by his practice, and also plainly sketched by his writings composed in his own defence; for it must never be forgotten that he is not like most men who have gone astray by refusing to practise what they preach, or proving unequal to square their own conduct by the rule which in general they confess to be just. His conduct has been openly and deliberately vindicated by himself upon the ground that all he did, at least all he admitted himself to have done, he was justified in doing; and he has confessed himself to have acted in every particular with an undeviating regard

to the pursuit of his own interests, and the gratification of his own passions.

Of Bolingbroke's private life and personal qualities, as apart from his public and political, little needs be added. He who bore the part in scenes which we have been contemplating could not easily have been a man of strict integrity, or of high principle in any relation of life. There may have been nothing mean or sordid in his nature; an honesty, seldom tried in persons of his station, may have been proof against the common temptations to which it was exposed; the honour which worldly men make their god may have found in him a submissive worshipper; but the more exalted and the nobler qualities of the soul were not likely to be displayed by one whose selfish propensities were gratified in public life at the cost of all that statesmen most regard in public character; and little reliance can be placed either on the humanity, or the self-control, or the self-respect of one whose passions are his masters, and hurry him on to gratification at all the hazards that virtue can encounter. Accordingly, his youth was a course of unrestrained and habitual indulgence. In a libertine age he was marked as among the most licentious. Even his professed panegyrist, Dean Swift, makes no defence for this part of his life, and only ventures to suggest that he had lived long enough to regret and repent of it. Sir William Windham,

too, fell into such courses, carried away by his example, and seduced by the charms of his society: and they who have written of him ascribe his early dissipation to the ascendant of such a Mentor. That he survived this tempest of the passions many years, and became more quiet in his demeanour during the calmness of his blood, is perhaps more the result of physical causes than any great eulogy of his returning virtue, or any manifestation of his penitence.

That his feelings, however, when left to their natural course, unperverted by evil associates, nor hurried by evil propensities, were kind and generous, there is sufficient proof. The marriage which in early youth he first contracted was one of accident and of family arrangement: like all such unions, it was attended with little happiness. The second wife was one of his choice: to her his demeanour was blameless, and he enjoyed much comfort in her society. His attachment to his friends was warm and zealous; and they cultivated and looked up to him with a fervour which can ill be expressed by such ordinary words as esteem or respect, or even admiration. Yet even in this relation, the most attractive in which he appears to us, his proud temper got the better of his kinder nature; and he persecuted the memory of Pope whom living he had loved so well, with a rancour hardly to be palliated, certainly not to be vindi

cated, by the paltry trick to which that great poet and little man had lent himself, in an underhand publication of the manuscripts confided to his care.

His spirit was high and manly; his courage, personal and political, was without a stain. He had no sordid propensities; his faults were not mean or paltry; they were, both in his private life and his public, on a large scale, creating, for the most part, wonder or terror more than scorn or contempt —though his conduct towards the Pretender approached near an exception to this remark; and the restless impatience with which he bore his long exclusion from the great stage of public affairs, and the relentless vengeance with which he, in consequence of this exclusion, pursued Walpole as its cause, betokened anything rather than greatness of soul.

That the genius which he displayed in the senate, his wisdom, his address, his resources in council, should, when joined to fascinating manners and literary accomplishments, have made him shine in society without a rival, can easily be comprehended. So great an orator, so noble a person in figure and in demeanour, one so little under the dominion of the principle which makes men harsh, and the restraints which tend to render their manners formal—was sure to captivate all superficial observers, and even to win the more precious applause of superior minds. To do that which he did

so well naturally pleased him; to give delight was itself delightful; and he indulged in the more harmless relaxations of society long after he had ceased to be a partaker in the less reputable pleasures of polished life. He probably left as high a reputation behind him, among the contemporaries of his maturer years, for his social qualities, which remained by him to the last, as he had gained with those who remembered the eloquence that in his earlier days shook the senate, or the policy and intrigues that had also shaken the monarchy itself. The dreadful malady under which he long lingered, and at length sunk—a cancer in the face—he bore with exemplary fortitude, a fortitude drawn from the natural resources of his vigorous mind, and unhappily not aided by the consolations of any religion; for, having early cast off the belief in revelation, he had substituted in its stead a dark and gloomy naturalism, which even rejected those glimmerings of hope as to futurity not untasted by the wiser of the heathens.*

Such was Bolingbroke, and as such he must be regarded by impartial posterity, after the virulence of party has long subsided, and the view is no more intercepted either by the rancour of political enmity, or by the partiality of adherents, or by the

* Lord Chesterfield, in one of his letters lately published by Lord Mahon (ii. 450), says, that Bolingbroke only doubted, and by no means rejected, a future state.

fondness of friendship. Such, too, is Bolingbroke when the gloss of trivial accomplishments is worn off by time, and the lustre of genius itself has faded beside the simple and transcendent light of virtue. The contemplation is not without its uses. The glare of talents and success is apt to obscure defects which are incomparably more mischievous than any intellectual powers can be either useful or admirable. Nor can a lasting renown—a renown that alone deserves to be courted of a rational being—ever be built upon any foundations save those which are laid in an honest heart and a firm purpose, both conspiring to work out the good of mankind. That renown will be as imperishable as it is pure.

TRANSLATIONS.

Page 7.

'T is not *your* burning words that fright me! No!
The Gods affright me, and great Jove my foe!

Or thus—

I fear not you, fierce man, whose accents glow—
I fear the Gods, and Jupiter my foe.

Page 96.

For first of all there must be mature deliberation; and when you have deliberated, there must be prompt execution.

Page 175.

Alas! how much less is it worth to live with others than to remember thee!

THE END OF VOL. VI.

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